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[RETRIBUTION.]

## NICKLEBOY'S CHRISTMAS-BOX.

### A Christmas Story.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Beat happy stars, timing with things below,  
Beat with my heart, more blest than heart can tell,  
Blest, but for some dark under-current of woe,  
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:  
Let all be well, let all be well. Tenyson's "Maud."

The week passed.

Clare had taken possession of his modest little room in Great Snoram Street and felt independent. According to his word to his father he had left the house in the square, but called there every day to receive any message his father might have for him. But none was ever brought him.

On the second day of his calling the old man-servant had brought him a small packet directed to him in his father's writing. Clare desired him to remain while he opened it, hoping that it would contain some word of affection he might cling to as a saving straw.

But the contents proved to be a small roll of bank notes with the various diamond trinkets he had purposely left in his dressing-room, accompanied by a note written in pencil, running thus:

"The same amount—in notes—will be at your command each month as long as your whim continues."

On the back of this Clare wrote with a flushed face:

"I asked for a father's love, not his gold, and, though still imploring for the former, will not now or ever accept the latter alone."

Repacking it with the bank-notes and jewellery, he desired the old man to return them to his father.

By thus refusing his father's coldly offered help he threw himself upon his own resources and boldly determined to starve rather than live by such icy charity.

When the end of the week came Mr. Brown came to him just before the leaving hour struck and,

handing him a sovereign wrapped in an envelope, said:

"Mr. Clare, your money. I cannot do less than accompany it with a word of approbation and pleasure. Here is a batch of this night's mail—you will see some foreign letters amongst them—perhaps you can give them your attention early on Monday. Should you dispatch the next week's work as this has been got through I shall have the pleasure of—well—yes, raising your salary by one-half—making it thirty shillings."

This stately speech was concluded by an offer of the hand and a kindly good-day, and Clare as he hurried off to his new home felt a thrill of honest pride that was as strange as it was delightful to his sad heart.

"Thirty shillings," he muttered, with a flush of secret hope. "I have read in novels of men being married and happy on a hundred pounds a year. Thirty shillings is not a long way off. Courage, Clare, courage, and you may yet wear the flower at your heart."

Still filled with the new and delicious sense of happiness, he started off on his nightly mission of love—the escort of Daisy from her work to her home.

Ten minutes before her time, as usual, he was waiting at the corner of the street at which Daisy's emporium was situated, anxiously watching the door at which he expected her to trip out, when his attention was attracted to a man in a beggar's rags who seemed similarly employed to himself—namely, watching the milliner's shop.

Something in the man's face—a certain air of better days, together with an eager, wistful expression that made his eyes bright and sparkling—set Clare wondering, in a curious, listless manner, what could be his object; and, thankful for anything to while away the time of waiting, he withdrew into the shadow of the wall and watched him closely.

A moment afterward the graceful form of Daisy appeared at the door, and he was surprised and

startled to see that the beggar, who had never removed his eyes from the shop, started forward with a strange cry.

Still wondering, Clare determined to remain in the shadow a moment longer, and was rewarded for his patience by seeing the beggar leap forward and muttering something stretch forth his hand to Daisy.

The gentle girl, looking down at his bent form with a pitying look, placed a penny in his hand and murmuring some soft word of pity passed on.

The beggar looked after her for a moment with a strange light upon his face, and Clare saw him press the coin to his lips with a fervent gesture such as might move the lips of a devotee kissing the feet of his patron saint.

Then Clare came forward, flushed with delight at the beautiful blush with which the girl met him, and walking on air as her little hand lay on his strong arm.

Still thinking of the beggar—haunted by the strange face and the startle of emotion he had witnessed—he said on their way home:

"Daisy," for he had grown to call her by that name—unrebuked, "did I not see you give something to a beggar at the corner?"

She blushed as she answered, simply:

"Yes, Mr. Clare, I call him my beggar man. Do you know he is there every night, and I always manage to give him something."

"Every night!" said Clare. "I do not remember seeing him before."

"Ah, no," she replied, "I forgot. He has been away, I think, for the last week or two. I remember now this is the first night I have seen him since."

"Since when?" he asked, seeing that she had stopped with her eyes fixed on the ground and a blush upon her cheek.

"Since you were rude enough to knock my basket from my arm."

"Ah, that precious basket," he replied, in a low tone, bending down with a glance of love in his bright

eyes. "What I owe that basket, Daisy! Had it not been for that—who knows?—I might never have seen you."

"So I think too," she retorted, archly, yet timidly, "for you were standing in the crowd as if you saw no one."

His brows darkened, and he sighed.

The night was visible to him now, as was the dark face of his father, sternly repelling his words of love, and coldly repressing his affection.

Throwing the bitter thoughts aside, he looked down upon the sweet, child-like face, and murmured:

"You would not have cared, Daisy, would you, if I had not seen you?"

She did not answer, and he repeated the assertion with a feigned sadness, then she looked up.

"Nor you if my poor little basket had not fallen?"

"Should I not?" he said, fervently pressing her hand, which rested on his arm against his side.

"Do you know, Daisy, I love that little basket. If anything happened to it I should grieve as if it were a living thing."

"If you are so fond of the basket——" she said, looking down with a rosy blush.

"Well?" he said, eagerly.

"You had better let me give it you," she said.

"Would you?" he returned. "Would you?"

"Ye-es—no!" she said.

"Why 'no' so suddenly?" he asked, again pressing her hand and laying his other upon it as she tried to draw it away. "Why so niggardly, Daisy, all at once?"

"Because," she faltered, "I like it myself."

"Ah! it is an old favourite," he said, with a lover's proverbial blindness or perversity misunderstanding her.

They spoke no more until they reached the little shop, where stood old Dan at the door, as usual, to welcome his children, as he called them, home.

Beside the fire that night Clare was thoughtful.

He would not sing, scarcely indeed would he talk, and Daisy, who watched every fleeting expression on his face, was secretly troubled and perplexed.

When he rose to go he bade old Dan and Mrs. Nickleboy good-night in the little parlour, saying that neither they nor Daisy should come to the door in the cold.

But when he had got to the door he called to Daisy to come and look at the stars.

As she came softly up to him he put out his hand and, taking hold of her arm, drew her within the shadow of the door.

"Look at the stars," he said, in a low voice that trembled with love, pointing upwards.

"Are they not beautiful?" the girl replied. "Do you know what they are?" she asked, in so gentle a voice that Clare might be pardoned for calling it star-music.

"No," he said. "Some say other worlds, some say globes of light, some say angels flitting through the sky."

"I like the last supposition best," she said, dreamily. "If they are angels perhaps they can see us and are smiling down with kindly hearts and good wishes. Angels! that is beautiful. I shall never look at the stars without thinking of them as such. Look at that one—is not that a bright angel?" she added, pointing to one particular planet glittering like a diamond above the presaic house-tops.

"That one do you mean?" said Clare, in a delighted voice. "That is my favourite, Daisy; do you know I can see it from my bed-room window, and I watch and watch it sometimes half the night through. And as I gaze at it I fancy it an angel—an angel with a sweet, childlike face, with deep, trusting blue eyes—an angel with a tender-hearted, smiling face in a setting of golden hair, and called——Daisy."

The girl, who had been looking up at his eager face, and listening to his soft voice with a rapt attention, perfectly unconscious that he was picturing herself, flushed as he concluded with her name, then turning pale drew herself a little away from him.

But Clare caught her, and pressing her to him bent his lips till they nearly touched her head, and went on, more softly, more passionately still.

"And, Daisy, I watch until I almost fancy I can hear my star-angel speak, and, striving to catch what it breathes, I often stretch forth my arms towards it, crying: 'Speak, my star, speak. I love you, star, I love you. Speak and tell me—what Daisy—oh, what?'"

She was silent, but he felt her bosom heaving against his side, and heard the breath come quickly and sobbingly.

"Do you not know what I want my star to say? Think—think I tell it that I love it with all my heart and soul, that unless it comes and lays itself against my heart I shall die. I tell it I love it as never man loved before. Oh, Daisy, be the star-angel and answer me."

Still no answer, and the young man with a sudden thrill of pain held her a little from him, and, turning aside his head, said:

"Daisy, you do not speak. Is it because you fear to tell me you do not love me, or that you have grown to like me as a brother, as a friend, but not—not—Oh, Daisy, speak, or I must go—I know not where!"

Still not a word came, and with a groan his hands dropped from her waist and sought the handle of the door.

Then with a long look he stepped out—but before he could close the door a tiny, trembling hand caught him, a sobbing voice breathed: "Clare!" and he was back.

Then, straining her to his heart, pillow her beautiful head upon his breast, kissing her sweet face and stroking her golden hair, he murmured:

"Oh, my darling, tell me, what does my Daisy-star say?"

And the girl whispered back:

"Yes."

And the little word rose and rose until it echoed to the star-angel in Heaven that wept with joy to hear it.

Of course Clare could not go without telling old Dan of his great fortune, so, still keeping Daisy's arm within his, he returned to the little parlour.

Mr. Nickleboy was just finishing the drain of supper beer he usually reserved for the last few minutes before bedtime, and, looking round, surprised to hear Clare's footsteps, stared with comical surprise at the happy pair.

But he read their news in Clare's flashing eyes and Daisy's blushing cheek, and with a low cry of delight jumped up and seized Clare's hand.

"Bless your hearts," he cried, his eyes filling with tears. "Bless you, my own sweet birds, and bless you, my honest boy. I see!—don't speak, my heart's too full."

And, overcome by his great joy, the simple old man leant his head upon his arm and wiped away his fast-flowing tears.

"Father! father!" cried Daisy, in distress.

"Don't cry. Oh, don't cry." And she took his white head against her bosom, and looked down upon him with loving eyes, that were not undimmed themselves.

"No, no, I won't, I won't—if I can help it," sobbed old Dan. "My birds, I'm crying for joy to see you so happy. And, what's more, I'm crying to think that he ain't here to see how I've——"

And old Dan stopped suddenly in his happy excitement, reminded by their puzzled look that he was making a slip.

"Eh? Oh, don't mind me, Clare, don't neither of you pay any attention to what I say; I'm a'most crazed with delight to see my Daisy, my treasure——"

Here he suddenly stopped again, and ruffling his white hair with a puzzled and half-bewildered smile caught the beautiful girl in his arms, and shaking Clare's hand until it looked like a pump handle, snatched up a candle and turned from the room.

Then came their first loving farewell, their first kiss, and the first thrill of ineffable joy that echoes in the words:

"Good-night, my darling!"

On Monday Clare got through his calculations and correspondence as well as his condition of mind would allow him.

He was in love, and up in the skies in a world of soft, bright golden hair, inhabited by angels—yeopit Daisy—and it was with a feeling of bewilderment he left the quiet office and sallied into the street.

That night he brought his treasure home with a new and more intense pleasure that ever he had felt before.

He was guarding his own.

"I don't see my beggar to-night," said Daisy, as they passed the corner where the ragged figure was usually posted.

"Nor I; he has taken a holiday, perhaps," said Clare.

"I hope he is not ill," returned Daisy, pityingly.

"He looks very delicate and ill always, poor fellow."

"Oh, he'll be here to-morrow night," said Clare, almost jealous even of the old beggar. "If he is not I will try and find him. I daresay the policeman knows where he lives."

"Will you?" said Daisy, gratefully. "How kind you are, Clare," and she pressed his arm.

"Am I? Then reward me," said Clare.

And stopping at a dark place, with no one in sight, he snatched a kiss from the beautiful lips.

Conversation was impossible after that, and the two happy lovers walked on.

As they came in sight of the house they saw Daisy's beggar putting up the shutters.

Clare uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and Daisy stopped to ask the man how he chanced to be there.

The beggar, who had a patch over one eye and a low cap that half-concealed his forehead, said in a low voice, that trembled, perhaps, with gratitude, that Mr. Nickleboy had engaged him to put up the shutters and help in various ways about the place—fixing his uncovered eye as he answered, not on Daisy but on Clare, with an expression which was half one of scrutiny and half of threat.

Clare, who was too intent on Daisy to notice the look, held out sixpence to the man when he had finished, and, saying a few kind words, followed Daisy into the shop.

"Ah! ah! here you are, my children," said Dan. "All safe, sound and happy," and he gave Daisy his usual kiss. "Did you see my new assistant, Clare?"

"Yes," said Clare. "I know him, so does Daisy. He stands at the corner of Oxford Street, and is a regular pensioner of hers."

"Oh, is he?" said old Dan. "That's funny now, isn't it? He came in here this afternoon and asked if he might be allowed to put the shutters up and do other odd jobs. Well, I know I'm a trusting old simpleton—not perhaps that it's over wise to be allus suspicious—and I said he might. Salary," added old Dan, "half a crown a week—dinner and tea. And now go along into the parlour, for the old lady has got a treat for you, I think—lastways she's been a-roasting herself in the kitchen and produced a most uncommon savoury smell."

Laughing happily, the two lovers made their way into the parlour, where a savoury dish of mutton outlets nicely browned and, as old Dan said, of a most savoury odour awaited them.

Notwithstanding the outlets and Daisy's bright laugh, Clare was that night somewhat quiet, and when he said the farewell which always took so long at the shop door he told Daisy that he had formed a resolution, though of what nature he would not tell her.

This resolution, whatever it might be, seemed to haunt Clare, for it stuck by him all the next day, and even made him quiet in the evening, when, with a certain reluctance, he told Daisy he must go before supper.

"Clare!" said the gentle girl. "Going so soon? What has happened?"

"Happened, Daisy? Well, nothing. I am only thoughtful to-night, thinking of you and our love, and forcing myself to an effort I know I must make at once."

And he spoke truly, for, watching the fire and her face, he had been asking himself that night where it was all to end.

Still filled with the resolution he had spoken of, he walked hurriedly in the direction of the square, and was so occupied with his own thoughts that it was not until within eight of the dark house that he became conscious that footsteps were following.

Anticipating an attack, he turned suddenly and came face to face with the beggar whom he had met once before that evening.

"Why are you following me?" he asked, frowningly.

"I am not following you for aught save good," replied the beggar, in a voice extremely unlike the usual mendicant whine.

"For good! what good?" said Clare, thoughtfully.

"For——"

The beggar hesitated, fixed his piercing eyes as if he meant to read Clare's soul, and then, without another word, turned swiftly away.

Clare looked after him for a moment, then crossed the square and knocked at the door of his father's house.

The old man whose duty it seemed to be to guard the seldom-opened portals touched the forehead wrinkled in the De Jersey's service, and was about to pass to his little room in the hall as silently, but Clare stopped him and asked him if his father was within.

"He has not been out, sir, for some nights past," replied the old man, "and is in his own room; I believe, sir."

Clare thanked him, and, walking slowly up the broad staircase, knocked at the door of the dark study, which no one dared open when its owner was within.

"Come in," said his father's voice, and Clare entered.

Looking up from a mass of papers over which he was bending, Mr. De Jersey frowned as he saw who had entered, and in a voice harsh and cold, strained so, it seemed to Clare, said, "Is it you, Clare? What do you want?" as if he had seen him the night before.

Turning pale, Clare De Jersey was about to speak when his father, who had noticed his sudden pallor, interrupted.

"Not a word of the matter you spoke of when last we talked together! That topic, Clare, must ever be a forbidden one."

"Fear not, sir," replied the youth. "I am little likely to distress you with farther offers of a sympathy so plainly repugnant to you. Fear not either, sir, that I shall ever distress you by frequent speech or frequent visits. I come to-night, driven by my sense of honour, which, with my pride, I inherit from my father."

With his head thrown back and his eyes sparkling the Clare De Jersey of to-night was a striking contrast to the one who pleaded on his knees some time back.

Mr. De Jersey bowed sternly. "So be it, Clare," he said, shading his eyes with his habitual reserve. "I am listening. First, perhaps you will tell me what secret business draws you from your home."

"My home?" repeated the youth, in a sad undertone, then aloud: "It is of that business I would speak, sir," he said; then, suddenly looking down, his face flushing redly, he said, in a husky voice: "Father, be generous; I am in love!"

"In love!" repeated Mr. De Jersey, turning his black eyes upon his son's downcast face. "In love, and—Clare, tell me all."

"There is little to tell, sir," he said, calmly. "A month ago I discovered an angel—your smile in like a frown, sir, but to me she is one of Heaven's angels, or her sweet face and nature belie her! I saw her in the street, mixing, poor gentle, Daisy, with the rough crowd. I took her to her humble home, found it as good and pure as she is, spoke of my love, won her in return, and—"

"Silence, sir!" cried the father, in a voice like suppressed thunder. "Saw her in the streets! Took her home!—humble! Are you mad, sir, or am I dreaming? Who is this—this girl, of whom you rave?"

"I am not mad, sir, nor are you dreaming," replied Clare, viewing the passion-white face before him with anxious eyes. "She is all I have said and more. I love her with all my heart. I am working—"

"I asked for no further raving," blazed Mr. De Jersey. "Mad boy, tell me, who is she?"

"She's the daughter of a small tradesman," began Clare, with evident reluctance.

But before he could continue a sudden cry of rage from his father, together with the ashy pallor of his face and the fierce light in his eyes, stopped him.

"Silence!" he cried, in a voice broken and hoarse with passion. "Speak not a word more! Shame on you, sir, to dishonour your name, my name, by such madness!"

"Dishonour!" repeated Clare.

"Ay, dishonour," snarled Mr. De Jersey, turning upon him with the glare of a tiger.

"Think you I have worked and striven for this? Think you I will sit by and see the wealth I have toiled, schemed, and sinned—ay, sinned for—mad boy!" he hissed, seeing Clare start incredulously—"sinned! I say, again a thousand times—to see the harlot-got gold fill the pockets of a scullery maid, an adventuress, a—"

"Silence!" cried Clare in his turn, his chest heaving with his indignation. "Silence, sir, in charity to yourself, whom you wrong by every word—not her, for such foul words cannot harm her more than mud can soil an angel. You call her this who never saw her—you—oh, father, father, you shall judge for yourself. To-morrow night I'll bring her here—"

"Dare!" cried Mr. De Jersey.

"Ay, dare," replied Clare. "I'll bring her here to-morrow night so that you may recall your words, I'll marry her next day and see your face no more."

Almost bursting with passion, he struck the table with his clenched fist.

The father looked at the white, set face of his son and was silent for a moment, then, standing up and resting one hand on the table, said:

"Suh, Clare De Jersey, you defy me. Now listen. You asked me some nights back to give you my confidence. I refused, and wisely. Now I comply that you may see what black shadow it is hangs over your father and yourself—ay, the very house itself. You know nothing of your early history save that this house has been your home, riches have been at your command since you were born. Listen how those riches came to you. There was once a noble house and two brothers—the elder a weak, simple-minded man with few ideas beyond his book; the younger a passionate, restless, ambitious being with a mind grasping everything. The noble name, the wealth of the house were held by the elder brother, the younger thirsted for them. The one weak and simple, the other passionate and ambitious—can you guess the rest? Ay, by scheme, boy, by violence, the one drove the other from the face of the earth, clasp his only child in his arms, to avoid a madman's doom, and reigned in his stead." Thus far the father proceeded in cold, measured tones, the son gazing with a half-incredulous, half-bewildered

terror on his set face. "The elder brother," continued Mr. De Jersey, "was your uncle, the younger I, your father. I hunted him down one Christmas Eve, left him groveling in the snow, clasping his breast in his arms, left him there to die or to fly in terror from the land that held his brother!"

"Oh, horror, horror!" cried the youth. "Am I mad? Am I dreaming?"

"Ay, to think to reward my toils by such a base return!" hissed the father. "You know all. Now go. If you still are mad, think whether I who stopped at nothing to win the wealth for you will stop at anything to revenge myself for your disobedience."

For several minutes he remained silent, his head bowed in his hands, then, rising, he said, in a determined voice:

"Notwithstanding all, father, I will keep my word. To-morrow I will bring her, that you may see I marry no such horror as you call her, and then we part for ever."

"The perils be your own," was the stern reply.

#### CHAPTER VII.

What matter this present, the gloomy, drear past, if safe within heaven we're happy at last?

As if in a dream Clare De Jersey lived through the next day. Scarcely possible did it seem that his father's confession could be anything but the revelation of a monomania, but through all the tossings of his bewildered mind the youth determined to bring his love face to face with his stern parent, and was resolved to carry out his whole purpose in marrying her and seeing his unnatural father no more.

Slowly as the day seemed to drag on it passed, and at night he repaired to the humble little chandler's shop which to him was dearer than his wealthy home.

Even there he was robbed of his consolation, for the necessity of concealing from Daisy his real position prevented his pouring his miserable story into her sympathetic ears, and he sat beside her at the parlor fireside holding her hand, a deep cloud on his brow and trouble at his heart.

Old Dan coming in from serving a customer found them thus.

"Well, my lads and lassies," he said, "how quiet we are. Why, Clare, boy, you ought to be merry as a skylark, so near Christmas too. Am I afraid as your poor brain is worked too hard at them figures. Figures, figures, all day long is enough to wear anybody's brains out."

"Christmas!" said Clare. "Ah, so it is, to-morrow's Christmas Eve."

"Ay, Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve!" replied the old man, sighing, although he smiled. "Deary me! what a many I've seen of 'em—some of 'em gay, and some of 'em sad. I can't expect to see many more of them, Clare."

"Father, father!" exclaimed the girl, tearfully, rising and throwing her arms round the old man's neck.

"Ay, ay," he said, nodding, and stroking her hair with a look of love. "Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve! Look at Christmas Eve says Dan, for his Daisy was found—born, I may say on Christmas Eve, Clare."

"Was she? My darling!" said Clare, rising and kissing her. "Then I say happy Christmas Eve too. But, Dan, I was going to ask you if I might take Daisy for a walk a little while. I want to show her something that will interest her, I think."

"Not the theatre, eh, Clare?" said the old man.

"No, not the theatre, Dan," said Clare. "I don't think you can guess—nor you, Daisy."

"Can't I guess, Clare?" she replied, looking up at him trustfully. "Then I will wait until you tell me. Where is it you are going to take me?"

"To see my old home," he said, and he led her out.

"Your old home?" she said, with surprise. "Ah, that will please me, Clare. Your old home—where you have lived! Oh, Clare, I would rather see it than any sight in the world."

"Well, you shall see it," he said, anxiously, returning her eager glance with a grave smile.

"Far from here?" asked old Dan, peering the door, and shivering he meant the outside of the house where he had told them he first lodged.

"Not very," said Clare. "Go, Daisy, and put your bonnet on."

In a few moments she tripped into the room, looking like a little fairy in her dainty bonnet and shawl, and giving her arm Clare led her into the street, old Dan watching them as they passed through the shop, and muttering:

"Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve!"

On their way to the gloomy home in the square Clare spoke but once.

"Daisy," he said, "you love me?"

A pressure of the little hand was the only answer.

"You trust in me, too, Daisy, and know I would not give you pain unnecessarily?"

"Yes, Clare," she whispered.

"Daisy, I am going to try your love, and your patience. You will be strong and brave?"

"I will be anything for you, Clare," she replied, breathlessly.

Then they went on until the house was reached. The young girl looked up at the mansion in wonder.

"Was this—"

"Yes, my darling, this was my home. Let us knock."

The door was opened and they passed in, the girl trembling, but, true to her promise, silent and unhesitating.

"Tell your master I am waiting in the drawing-room," he said, and still holding Daisy's arm in his he passed into the large saloon.

Leaving them for an instant to await the coming of the father, let us return to the chandler's shop.

Scarcely had they gone than old Dan, closing the door, went to a sideboard, and, taking from it a desk, set it upon the table. Blowing the fire till the red glow lit up his white hair like a crown of snow, he unlocked the desk, and taking from a corner of it an old-fashioned silk-net purse, sat down by the fire again, and, turning the purse over in his hand, murmured:

"Twenty years ago, my poor Daisy—she was like to have perished in the snow! Ah, how bad men are when their passions get the better of them! Twenty years ago—and yet it might be that yesterday I might see so well the poor thing's face. And, my boy, but he loved little Daisy—he loved her, poor little wee thing, or he'd never have been so earnest like; and old Dan's kept his trust too. No harm has come a-nigh her, she's been as happy as a bird in the nest, and now with a handsome lad to wed her old Dan can lay his hand on his foolish old heart and say he's kept his trust—kept his—What's that?"

For the door was suddenly burst open, and the ragged figure of the beggar rushed into the room, a horrified fear impressed upon his face, and a terrified look in his dark, piercing eyes.

Old Dan started to his feet, but before he could utter a cry the man seized him by the hand, and whispered in his ear:

"Where has she gone? Where has she gone?—to him!—to him!" and then ran into the street, beckoning with his hand.

Old Dan caught up his hat, filled with some dread of impending ill to his darling Daisy, and followed after.

Five minutes passed, Daisy looking round the room and up at her lover's form and gloomy face with wonder and fear.

Then a footstep was heard upon the stairs and Mr. De Jersey entered.

Daisy shrank back from his gleaming eyes, but Clare took her by the hand and throwing back his head, said:

"She is here, sir! Look in her face and tell me if she is unworthy to be your daughter."

Mr. De Jersey uttered a harsh laugh and turned away, but suddenly, as if awed by some unknown influence, turned and looked at the shuddering girl.

As he did so a change came over his face, and with a low cry he strode a step forward.

At that instant a loud knock was heard at the door, the sound of hurried footsteps came along the hall. The drawing-room door was wide open, and Mr. Daniel Nickleby and the beggar rushed into the room.

"Daisy! Daisy!" shouted old Dan.

"My child, my child!" echoed the beggar. "Oh, Heaven! not too late, not too late!"

Mr. De Jersey turned sharply round at the sound of the voice, stared with startled eyes at the wan, worn face, which had now no disguising patch or cap, and uttering a piercing shriek fell upon the ground.

Clare was on his knees beside him in an instant, but before he could touch the prostrate form it had raised itself on one arm, and pointing to where the young girl lay senseless in the arms of the beggar gasped:

"Brother! brother!" and fell back dead, with the blood of a ruptured blood vessel streaming over his breast.

What need is there to tell the reader how Clare, rising, stupefied to his feet, found that the man who had fallen in the streets on Christmas Eve twenty years before was Daisy's father and the beggar who had watched her day by day and year by year, choosing rather to live in poverty and want, unknown and unloved, than risk the hatred of the brother who had already wronged him and his child so cruelly?

All this was told him both by old Dan and the weeping father himself, but it was not perhaps until weeks after when he led his cousin, the heiress to the De Jersey wealth—once simple Daisy—to the altar as his bride, that he could understand how noble had

been the father's love and how terrible the brother's crimes.

How gloriously old Dan had kept his trust, and how joyfully he had taken the little Winter Daisy to his honest old heart no man could measure, but all could realize how fearful had been the remorse which had dogged the miserable man who had been seduced by avarice into depriving his brother of his inheritance.

Falling in his endeavour to confine him in a lunatic asylum under pretence of his insanity by George De Jersey's flight, the younger De Jersey, pursuing him to London, had found him at an hotel, and, striving by threats to induce him to give up the little child he had carried with him, for she was the heiress to the immense estates, he had tempted him into the streets, and there, as old Dan had witnessed, giving vent to his passions, he had nearly branded himself as a homicide and a Cain.

When the next Christmas came round with its frost and snow a happy group was gathered round the huge fireside of the house in Cornwall, which, no longer bleak and gloomy, was the home of Clare and Daisy De Jersey.

Opposite the beautiful face of the mistress of the mansion sits a pale, thin old gentleman, reminding one dimly of the weakly, trembling figure which sat there in the dark years long ago, save that this—although the same figure—is a happy, peaceful one, and that, instead of having its proud glance fixed upon a cradle at its feet, it is nursing a blue-eyed babe, already to him a second angel-Daisy.

At the table is another old man—a strong, white-haired old man—who is mixing a bowl of punch and chatting in a cheery voice to the old lady, who, though dressed in silks and satins, is still the sweet-faced old lady who used to cook mutton cutlets so admirably at No. 27, Great Snoram Street.

And now, as the mixture is completed, the door swings open, and a tall, handsome-looking gentleman enters.

"Ah, ah!" he cries, looking at them with a smile of love and joy. "All here warm and snug. Well, here's some game," throwing a heavy bag upon the table, "and, what's better, here's some punch."

And with a ringing laugh Clare De Jersey catches up a tumbler of the steaming beverage, and, raising it above his head, says:

"Daisy, my darling; little Daisy, my flower-blossom; father,"—for so he calls George De Jersey—"and Dan, and the old lady, here's love to you all—a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

THE END.

**THE POTATO CROP.**—Much has been written of late about the potato disease, and, although the subject seems exhausted, there yet remains a few facts to be told. In Cambridgeshire, for instance, the kinds of potatoes which have been least affected by the disease are Myatt's ashleaf kidney and River's royal ashleaf kidney. These have yielded crops containing fully 90 per cent. of good sound potatoes and very fine samples as to size. The nonpareil kidney has also yielded satisfactorily, the crop being prolific and the effect of the disease positively insignificant. Among the round kind of potato the rock has produced good crops, and with but only a small share of disease in many instances. All other kinds of potatoes planted for use in winter, whether kidney or round, have been an utter failure. Some crops have been deemed not worth taking up. It has been found that in planting potatoes trenching in the sets has been followed by larger or fuller crops than when the sets are dibbled in or ploughed in.

**LORD NAPIER IN DEFENCE OF OATMEAL PORRIDGE.**—In the report of one of the sections of the recent meeting of the Social Science Congress at Plymouth there is to be found an animated discussion as to "feeding Industrial Schools." The fallacy of such, as affording an inducement to worthless parents to neglect their children, was strongly urged by some speakers. Miss Carpenter, of Bristol, who read a paper advocating such schools, meeting the objection, in her reply, is reported to have said:—"The food was not given away as an inducement to the children to attend, but because of their famished condition." She started with one meal—a dinner—but was soon obliged, in simple humanity, to supplement it by afternoon and morning meals. "The morning repast was oatmeal porridge; and if a boy could eat oatmeal porridge with thankfulness, he must be starving." (Laughter, and expressions of dissent from Lord Napier.) Bravo! Lord Napier, worthy of the addendum of "Ettrick," in thus standing up for "the old Scotch brose." A nation's voice will gladly re-echo his lordship's dissent. If the swallowing of oatmeal porridge be the test of starvation, then has Scotland for long centuries been nationally in a state of starvation. Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary was pleased to show his enmity to Scotland and Scotchmen (save only his henchman and chron-

icler, Boswell) by defining oats as "The food for horses in England and of men in Scotland." The reply was—"Granted, but where will be found such horses as are in England and men such as in Scotland?" We had thought that this ignorance of dietary had vanished; and above all places least expected to find it paraded in the Congress of Social Science. Those who have studied the matter either medically or practically will be slow to assign a higher state of physical health and vigour to the ale-imbibing peasantry of England than to the porridge-fed labourers of Scotland. The lady orator, on inquiry, will discover that the corporeal carpentry of Sandy is better finished off and fitted for active service at home and abroad than, it may be, the better-fed native of the favoured South.

#### THE LATE MR. HORACE GREELEY.

It is not easy for the English public to realize the picture of a Horace Greeley, a man with great political influence, and the means, if he cared to use it, of amassing wealth, and who yet retained—in one of the fastest and most glittering of cities—a simplicity of life which resembled that of an old-fashioned country farmer. In appearance Mr. Greeley was as odd as he was independent and eccentric in character. He was rather above the middle size, heavy, awkward and uncouth in figure, but with a great head and a face which in a certain sense might be called handsome, and could in no sense be called other than noble.

The impression at first produced on the stranger was that of soft and probably eccentric benevolence, and nothing more. But in Mr. Greeley's head there was an obvious power, it was the large strong head of the self-made man. The contour of head and face denoted well enough the contest between the intellectual and the emotional which was always going on in his career. His intellect was singularly vigorous, clear and penetrating; his temperament was eccentric, impulsive and emotional. He was always advising shrewdly, and often acting foolishly—that is with a kindly hearted tenderness which made people laugh at him and love him. He was always giving people lessons on hard economy, and constantly lending his money to anybody who made up a tale of distress and asked for it.

Mr. Greeley passed for one of the worst public speakers in the United States, where almost everybody can talk fluently. He was, indeed, as to manner and delivery, a bad speaker. He had no single quality which belongs to mere rhetorical grace or effectiveness. His voice was thin and wiry, his accent was drawing, his gestures were few and ungainly. Yet he generally impressed Englishmen very favourably, perhaps because Englishmen, as a rule, are less fluent, and value fluency less than Americans. Mr. Greeley's speeches were always as clear as light. His vigorous understanding enabled him at once to get to the heart of a question, to separate clearly and throughout the essentials from the accidentals. His language was simple and forcible; always the most expressive word, and never a second word where one conveyed the speaker's meaning. He was full of appropriate illustration and humorous anecdote. The listener very soon forgot the awkward manner, defective voice, and untrained style of this New Hampshire Cobbett.

As a speaker he would probably, despite his drawing manner and his disagreeable voice, have been a decided success in the British House of Commons.

Mr. Greeley lived a plain and simple life—in the country on his farm. In New York, although he was always genial and hospitable in entertaining his friends, his own personal habits were of the same simplicity. In his mode of living he was a perfect ascetic; but he enjoyed the pleasant society of a dinner table as much as if he had been a bon vivant. He never tasted wine, not often touched animal food of any kind, rarely drank tea, and abhorred tobacco.

"I should be very sorry to say," he once remarked, in his broad, blunt way, "that every smoker is a scamp, but I certainly never heard of a scamp who was not a smoker." Free Trade, smoking and divorce were his three special abominations, and he declined to hold any parley with them.

Everybody in New York and the State knew Mr. Greeley personally, and his portrait was familiar all over the Union. Almost everybody in New York knew him in public life; but he was far from being indiscriminate in the choice of his private friends. Nor was it everybody who could, to use a vulgar phrase, "put up" with his occasional whims and oddities. He made many enemies by queer, unexpected bursts of petulance in private as well as in public controversy. Yet his personal character may justly be described as almost altogether amiable. Decidedly the hard and rugged life of his youth and his early defects of education made him often inattentive to the graces of controversy and of conversation. Some blunt,

harsh phrase, which escaped from him almost unheeded, was sometimes kept in bitter memory, and created a new foe for him. But Mr. Greeley had the soul of a gentleman and a man of honour. He was one of the few men ever to be found in the world at the same time who seem absolutely without reverence for mere social rank. He was well acquainted with European politics, and had seen much of Great Britain and the Continent. He loved a certain kind of English literature—chiefly of the more gentle and sentimental class; for it must be owned that he was not much of a critic, and valued an author's purpose and moral far more than his artistic capacity.

His character was profoundly imbued with the religious spirit of his Puritan ancestry. Franklin himself had not a more devouring love of hard work. People said that his eccentricities were affectation, and that he got up his careless costume before the looking-glass, somewhat like the person mentioned in one of Steele's essays, who spent half an hour in studying his airs of indifference, and was always running back to the mirror to recollect his forgetfulness. But the stern trials of Greeley's boyhood, the severe work of his maturer years, the unrelenting energy and the vehement impulses of his whole career would surely explain readily enough an indifference to social forms which at length became habitual and unconquerable. If a man can ever be really known to those around him it was known to Mr. Greeley's friends that the basis of his character was its simplicity. Everything in him was plain and homely but his intellect. That made him, despite his occasional wrongheadedness and prejudices, one of the foremost men in his country. His peculiarities and whimsies were so much a part of himself and his nature that without knowing something of them one could not know the man at all. We could no more think of him without those personal oddities than we could think of Dr. Johnson without his whims, his gruffness, and his superstitions. There was certainly nothing of the Latin poet's *feres atque rotundus* in the manners and temperament of Mr. Greeley; but there was a sterling manhood and a robust intellect which count far more than cool philosophy or elegant manners in the making either of a character or of a nation.

Mr. Horace Greeley was born in 1811 at Amherst, New Hampshire, and was apprenticed to a printer at Putney, in the State of Vermont. After having removed to New York, and set up a weekly paper in which he advocated the Socialist views of Fourier, the well-known *New York Tribune* was started in 1841, and that journal was conducted by him, as proprietor and editor, until a few months ago. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1848, but did not long retain his seat in that Assembly, nor did he ever hold office. As an enthusiastic Abolitionist, he was much in favour with the Republican party during the presidency of Mr. Lincoln, and his zeal for protection to the American manufacturing interests, with a vehement antipathy to Free Trade, made him popular with a large class in New England and Pennsylvania. His nomination for President, however, which was the desperate act of a malcontent section of Republicans, proved an utter failure, and it is said that the mortification he thereby suffered, with sorrow for the death of his wife, caused the attack of brain fever which terminated his life in his sixty-second year on November the 29th, 1872.

**VISIT OF THE KING OF BELGIUM.**—The visit of the King of Belgium to Liverpool has been postponed for the present. The arrangements for it had gone so far that the Belgian Consul had gone from here to Brussels to take His Majesty's pleasure as to the day on which he would proceed to that town; but owing to the death of the Queen's half-sister, who was first cousin of Leopold II., His Majesty gave up his intended sojourn in the Isle of Wight, and this led to the postponement of his visit to Liverpool.

**CAREFULNESS IN OLD AGE.**—An old man is like an old waggon; with light loading and careful usage it will last for years, but one heavy load or sudden strain will break it and ruin it for ever. So many people reach the age of fifty or sixty, or even seventy, measurably free from most of the pains and infirmities of age, cheery in heart and sound in health, ripe in wisdom and experience, with sympathies melted by age, and with reasonable prospects and opportunities for continued usefulness in the world for a considerable time. Let such persons be thankful, but let them also be careful. An old constitution is like an old bone, broken with ease, mended with difficulty. A young tree bends to the gale, an old one snaps and falls before the blast. A single hard lift, an hour of heating work, an evening of exposure to rain or damp, a severe chill, an excess of food, the unusual indulgence of any appetite or passion, a sudden fit of anger, an improper dose of medicine; any of these or other similar things may cut off a valuable life in an hour, and leave the fair hopes of usefulness and enjoyment but a shapeless wreck.



[A DISCOVERY.]

## THE SECRET OF SCHWARZENBURG.

### CHAPTER XXII.

The first bringer of unwelcome news  
Hath but a losing office; and his tongue  
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell  
Remembered knolling a departed friend.

Shakespeare.

The prince went slowly back to where the count was still smoking and drinking.

The latter looked at him curiously, and exclaimed: "What calamity has overtaken you, my prince?"

He hastened to fill up his glass with wine, which the prince swallowed as if it choked him.

"Schrodter," said he, "are the days of miracles gone by? Could a delicate woman escape from the roof of a solitary house three storeys from the ground, and in the midst of a desolate wood? Tell me, would it be possible?"

"That depends upon the assistance she had. If there was somebody below with a wire ladder, or if she was secure from all espionage, I do not see that such an escape would be necessarily miraculous."

"The man believes it. I read it on his face. He devoutly believes that the heavens opened a way for her. She was securely guarded from retreat below, and had she reached the ground was still barred in by high walls and locked gates. Yet she is gone and there is no trace."

"I faith," responded Sebastian Schrodter, coolly, while he knocked off the ashes from his fifth cigar; "I faith I should rather risk a purse on her being carried off by an eagle or—why, our friend's balloon yesterday."

The hand of the prince came down upon the table with a force that shook everything on it.

"By my father's sceptre, Schrodter, you have hit it!" he cried, springing up, all his face aflame with joyful relief. "I could swear this minute that was the way of it. Do you remember the pale face we were certain we saw? Dolts! idiots! they have allowed him to carry her off over their very heads. A miracle indeed! Ho, there! Seud in the man again—the man Seippel."

But wise Seippel had taken himself away. The prince flung an anathema after him and called in his confidential agent.

That day there went forth a secret decree which set the royal spies upon the watch over every aeronaut within fifty miles and more.

Carl Koepfel heard of it soon enough. The visitor to whom that evening of his exciting adventure he had opened the door with so much secret misgiving

and alarm had proved to be one of his neighbours, a curious, meddlesome fellow who was no favourite with the aeronaut. But he served him a good turn albeit unmeaningly, for the second evening he came again and opened his budget of news. This time the worthy couple were in readiness for visitors. They were sitting quietly together, Crezenece at her needlework with her foot on the cradle singing her soft lullaby to the heavy little eyes and ears there, and Carl busy over his torn silk, for he was already eager and earnest to repair the balloon.

"Well, fraulein, a good even to you. You'll be thinking I'm a good neighbour, I'm sure, to come again to-night. But I was in hopes to hear something about your trip the other day, Koepfel. I'm mightily interested in that balloon of yours, and so it seems are some other folks. There's two strangers in town asking all about you. I heard 'em questioning old Max over at the beer saloon, and they are there now."

"Asking about me?" questioned Carl, in as cool a tone as he could command. "Pray what do they know about me?"

"Faith that's more than I can tell. But I think it is nothing more than because you understand balloons. The men were mighty inquisitive though, and wanted to know how lately you had made an ascent, and if your balloon was in good order."

Crezenece had stopped singing and her face was averted, but her needle flew very swiftly.

"Some folks are always inquiring into such things just for curiosity's sake," commented Carl, lightly. "However, I am ready to answer their questions. Let's fill our pipes and go out and see what's going on."

Carl rose as he spoke, and proffered his tobacco box, and then took up his hat.

His visitor could not very well decline, but it was plain that he was in no hurry to take leave.

"I shouldn't wonder a mite if they were here in the course of ten or fifteen minutes," he ventured, at length. "They were asking where you lived."

"If we meet them it may save them some trouble. Wouldn't it be a fine thing, fraulein, if they came to hire me to make an ascension at some fête? Thou shouldst have a new shawl straightway," laughed Carl, in apparently the most unconcerned manner.

"But the balloon is hurt, isn't it?" queried the other, eyeing askance the torn rag of silk lying on the floor in the heap the aeronaut had left it.

"What, that? Oh, that's the old covering. Don't you know I'm getting ready a grand new one, and have a great improvement under way? That's why I've been taking such frequent trips. They are only experiments to test my new method."

"Oh, I suppose so. I'm no better than a child about understanding such queer affairs. The solid earth seems the best journeying road for me. The ground is plenty good enough for me."

Carl joined his laugh, and opened the door, and the inquisitive neighbour was perforce compelled to accompany him.

Crezenece waited until she heard the little gate close after them.

Then she rushed to her humble little pantry, heaped all the food she could find into a basket, seized a great jug and filled it full of water, and hastened, without any light to guide her up, to the old wardrobe in the attic.

Lady Pauline came at the low, imploring call, and helped slide open the back of the wardrobe.

"Hasten to take these in, and let me hurry back," cried Crezenece. "The police are on poor Carl's track. They are coming to inquire about his balloon ascension. It may be we shall not be able to see you for several days, for I am sure we shall be watched closely, if not taken away to prison. If you hear me sing gaily you will know there is imminent danger, and that you must keep utterly quiet. I will use a mournful tune to give you assurance of continued hope and safety."

The poor little woman's voice was full of terror, not for herself, but for her husband.

The heart-smitten fugitive heard it.

"Alas!" she cried, "it is more bitter than my own danger to think of the loss and trouble that may come to you. Let me escape into the street, and trust to Heaven's protection."

"No, no," returned Crezenece, firmly, recalled to her own brave, generous spirit. "I counted the cost before. It is only our duty that we do. Pray be patient and as hopeful as may be. Adieu! Remember to listen for my singing. I may make its words all my method of communication with you."

She ran back to her post, and was sitting rocking the cradle and singing at the top of her voice, as though not a care in the world rested upon her spirit, when the dreaded summons came to call her to the door.

She felt her heart throbbing wildly, but she hardly stopped her song, and tripped lightly to open the door, dropping a low courtesy as she met the glance of two strangers.

"Does Carl Koepfel, an aeronaut, live here?" asked the foremost man.

"He does, sir. Will you be pleased to walk in? He has gone out with a comrade, but he will be home shortly."

The two men exchanged glances.

"I must go," said the one in the rear.  
 "And I will come in and wait," quoth the other.  
 Crezenze tripped back and set a chair for him, then returned to her cradle and her work.

The man watched the beaming, apparently artless face in close scrutiny for a moment or two, and then asked:

"Do you think we could hire your husband's balloon for to-morrow morning early?"

"To-morrow—oh, no! And what a pity! He is taking it all to pieces to make a new improvement. Wouldn't you be able to wait until he could get it done? It's so seldom, alas! he has a chance to make any money by it. Oh, please wait if you can."

"I'm sorry it isn't in order. Do you mean that he met with an accident with it?"

"No great accident. I know the old silk ripped and tore," returned she, serenely, pointing her needle in mid-air and looking straight into his face.

"An innocent little goose," thought the detective. "I could soon find everything out, if there was any mischief. I begin to doubt if this is the man after all."

Then he asked, in the blandest voice:  
 "Your husband takes frequent flights in his balloon, doesn't he? I should think you would be afraid he would fly away from you some time with another woman. Was there ever a lady went up or came down with him?"

Crezenze's merry laugh rang out gleefully.  
 "No jealous of Carl! Oh, sir, if you knew me you would see how absurd it seems! I don't believe he could tempt a lady into such a dangerous, giddy place, any except me. I went with him once, but my heart was in my mouth. Good Saints! how would he make room in the car for a lady? It is such a small affair!"

"And when was he up the last time? Was it long since?"

She dropped her head on one side, and held up the plump pink-tipped fingers to count upon.

"Let me think, was it yesterday, or the day before, or the day before that? I can't be sure—it was one or the other, and then he went last week, and the week before that, and twice the week of lady's birthday festival."

Then she dropped her work and started up.

"There he comes. I hear his step!"

Running to the door to meet him, she seized Carl's hand, giving it a warning pressure, while she ran on, glibly:

"Oh, Carl, here's a gentleman come to hire your balloon. To think you have just taken it to pieces to remodel. Can't you fix it back again so that he can take it? It would be comforting to have the balloon earn something at last."

"I will try, certainly," answered Carl, quickly taking the cue; "but it is terribly out of condition now. Good-evening, sir. Do you want it for an exhibition, or a fete, and how soon?"

"I only came to make inquiries about it for another," returned the man, completely nonplussed by this entirely unassuming behaviour. "But I'm very much interested in balloons just now."

"I'll get it ready as soon as I can, if you will make it worth while. I've been altering and experimenting for a long time. There's room for new invention and discovery, I confess."

"You were out two days ago, your wife admits. What route did you take? where did you land? I wonder if it was your balloon I heard about plunging down so madly into one of the fields belonging to the Schroeder domain? There are two or three people who saw the man."

"Likely as not. I'm not familiar with the great people or their estates, and shouldn't know whose fields I trespassed on, unless some one came to inform me. But about my balloon—did you wish to try a trip in it?"

"I shouldn't mind, I confess."

"Are you in a hurry?" questioned Carl, with all the eagerness of an enthusiast and expert. "I could get ready in two days by working a little at night, if you make it worth my while. I'm a poor man, you know, and can't afford to throw away my money."

"I can put it in your way to make a snug little sum," said the man, as eagerly, and turning upon him abruptly. "Find me that lady who was taken out of the Forest House by a balloon, and three hundred florins shall be yours at once. You know what I mean. There is no use in trying to counterfeit amazement. While I have been sitting here my man without has signalled the arrival of a courier despatched to find the boy who brought back your balloon the other night. He has proved you to be the man we seek. His signal tells me that. Choose quickly, my man, between this comfortable little competence and ruin and a prison."

Carl's eyes flashed proudly as he replied:  
 "Your words are very strange. I have nothing to say about a lady, nothing whatever."

"Your choice, sir, between a well-filled purse and a prison. Understand that the demand is made by no humble or insignificant person. The hand that offers gold or iron bars has the ability to perform," repeated the other, sternly, going to the door as he finished and giving three raps upon it, which were immediately answered by the entrance of three stout men, who nodded and stood back waiting farther orders.

Crezenze, all the pretty pride gone from her cheeks, sprang to her husband's side.

"What does the man mean, Carl? How can any one, however high in rank and powerful in name, give an innocent man to a prison? What can they accuse you of? It is an idle speech spoken to frighten us."

"The house must be searched promptly," spoke the leader, waving his hand authoritatively. "I must send back a message concerning the matter to-night. Go, leave no cranny that could hide the person even of a child unvisited."

The three men went quietly but resolutely to their work.

Carl half believed his little Crezenze crazed when she flung open the doors for them, saying, scornfully:

"If that is all we are soon rid of trouble. Search! Much will you find to warrant this insolent invasion of an innocent household!"

And she began to sing a gay song, whose ringing chords floated up through the open doorway, and warned the pale prisoner in the little secret chamber to be on her guard, and remain as silent as though her very life depended upon the stillness there.

Carl drew his wife toward him and whispered:

"They will find her retreat, Crezenze. I have thought of a desperate plan of escape, if you will be a brave little woman and manage for me. If only they leave us here to-night, I will escape with her, and you shall follow me as soon as may be abroad."

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

The time when screech-owls cry and hound-dogs howl,  
 And spirits walk, and ghosts break up their graves. *Shakespeare.*

THAT night which followed the test of the silver brand was a wakeful and troubled one for all the principal personages at Schwarzenburg. And for none more than for Aubrey Dalborg, whose perturbation of spirit would scarcely allow him to rest in one position or locality more than a few moments at a time.

His experience at this charming and romantic spot had been dreamy and unreal enough before, but now it seemed as if everything tangible and positive had floated away, and left him swinging dizzily and bewildered, without anything to hold by either in the past or present.

The longer he dwelt upon certain mysterious ways and looks that came up vividly now from out the experience of his boyish days, the more positive did his suspicions grow.

And his impetuous young spirit chafed restlessly at the barriers that surrounded him, and at the broad distance of land and sea that separated him from those who could, who must, he assured himself, answer his questions truthfully.

Wonderful indeed seemed the chance which had brought him to this place, a Providence rather than a chance he believed it.

He recalled again the enthusiastic admiration, the proud appreciation which had stirred his heart with such unusual emotion when he first approached Schwarzenburg.

Had it really been but the natural response of a Heaven-imparted instinct? Had he a right here to these grand old walls? Were the ancestral honours a part of his rightful heritage?

A restless longing came over him to visit again the gallery where the dead and gone ancestors of the stately house lived still in pictured semblance.

He had thrown himself upon the couch without removing his clothes.

He rose softly, turned the key of his door, and opened it noiselessly, looking out into the broad corridor which was dimly lighted by the starbeams shining through the great arched window at the end, with a vague impression of awe and hope.

There was no harm surely in his walking softly to try the gallery door.

No one was ever there in the daytime, much more could he be sure of its solitude at this dead hour of midnight.

He returned, took in his hand the coil of wax taper lying on the table, and set forth upon the venture.

The weird, grotesque shadows from the quaint carvings mottled the floor with uneasy figures, but they gave no echo to his careful steps.

Once a trailing banner, falling from the spear of a sculptured knight who guarded an arched opening in the wall, touched his shoulder lightly, and made him start.

The silken fragment had gone forth a century past proudly and triumphantly to battle. The dust of silent years had gathered upon it now, but it was still full of suggestive eloquence.

Had it thrilled to life to drop a ghostly touch claiming him as a son of the proud old line?

Aubrey walked on with less of the air of a thief and intruder.

The gallery door was not fastened. Something in the fine thrill of nervous expectancy that tingled throughout his whole frame had already assured him that it would not be.

He pushed it open, and walked into the blackness there unhesitatingly.

Then, bethinking himself of possible intrusion, he went back and closed it, and lighting the taper, which shed but a feeble gleam in the long dark gallery, he began at the door, and went slowly and deliberately from picture to picture, studying the lineaments of each with careful scrutiny, but all the while conscious of the subtle, magnet attraction that was drawing him towards the other end of the long and silent row.

His eye deepened and dilated, his heart beat faster, his breath came in little, convulsive gasps as he approached at length the veiled portrait.

It almost seemed like lifting a coffin lid when his trembling fingers seized the black cloth and flung up the curtain.

The last baron, the true eldest son, and Lady Pauline, his wife! Hapless couple, whose brilliant prospects had been cut off in such untimely and woful fashion!

Wistfully, imploringly Aubrey's eyes sought those that looked forth from the canvas with such wonderful intelligence and life-like power. Oh, for the power to call back speech and vitality!

He sighed heavily.

Did another sigh seem to answer, floating past him like a ghostly breath?

He turned his head quickly. Something was near him.

He knew it—the felt it. But where and what? He looked around him, and saw nothing but the flickering lights from his taper playing along the double row of gilded frames and canvas faces.

The carved groins of the elaborate ceiling rose silently above him, the mosaic floor shone clear and empty around him.

He stood there alone, the only living creature amid all the pictured life, the only animate thing with power to move and stir.

Nay, even while he gazed and rubbed his eyes as if to disperse an illusion of vision, the great, gilded frame of the pictured knight opposite him stirred.

Good Heavens! frame and picture both moved forward—seemed to advance towards him.

A cold current of air extinguished the tiny flame of his taper.

Involuntarily Aubrey fell back, while a cold dew gathered on his forehead.

Something distinct, taking visible form, glided forth.

There was still light enough for him to see that it had a woman's shape.

It went on, either unmindful or uncaring for his presence, and stretching out a long and shadowy arm, seemed to touch the pictures one by one, until it came to that of the lovely and hapless Lady Pauline.

There it stopped and bent forward, and the hands were outstretched, he thought, in benediction or in anathema. Again a long, low, fluttering sigh floated by him weirdly, but with it came also a sharp click—too matter-of-fact a sound to accompany a ghost—and a rustle of papers followed, and after that unmistakably the low-breathed ejaculation:

"Safe now. May Heaven be praised!"

At this all his awe and superstitious dread fell away, and, reckless of consequences, he determined to behold the face of the midnight visitor.

He held the coil of taper in his hand, he struck a match quickly, and lighted it steadily, and then turned to confront a figure standing like something suddenly petrified, with clasped hands and white face and wild, imploring eyes that ran over his features with a singular blending of alarm and astonishment.

"Who are you that intrude here?" demanded Aubrey, in a whisper, mindful of his own need to avoid disturbing the house, "and where have you come from? I thought at first it was a ghost—the Lady Pauline's ghost!"

The white, shivering lips made many efforts before an audible speech came from them.

"And you—tell me your name, that you stand before me with the very look and bearing of one who has long since left the earth and these stately walls. You are not—you cannot be Valentinus's son, and wear on your lips the very smile of his wronged kinsman."

"No; I am not the Baron Rader's son, wherever else

I may be. I am a guest in this house, or a prisoner—it matters little which you may call me. But I am no Baer, and just now I have little liking for the name or the individual."

"A prisoner!" repeated the lady. "Then—then you are not in the favour of the ruler of the guards here?"

"You mean Von Schubert. No, I am not on his side—neither on one side nor the other. I am an Englishman."

The thin white hands were clasped together joyfully.

"An Englishman, and bearing the resemblance that would bid me trust him, even if he were in the enemy's rank! Surely, surely this is another of the wonderful ways in which Heaven befriends at last the long-suffering and the wronged one. Tell me, oh, as you hope for help in your own need, tell me truly, will you help a poor, persecuted, cruelly wronged woman?"

"I would indeed if it lay in my power," answered Aubrey, some answering chord in his heart thrilling back to that sweet, sad voice, those mournful eyes. "But, as I say, I am myself ensnared here, although I have the promise of a clear way to depart to-morrow."

"To depart—to go whither?"

"To England; would to Heaven I could reach it in a single stride," he returned, impetuously.

"And would that you might take me with you to my child, my precious one," she murmured, the lips writhing, but no tears flooding the glittering eyes.

"You have friends there?" he asked, in surprise.

"My all is there, my own, my Leina."

"Leina?" exclaimed Aubrey, in unbounded amazement. "Is she a young girl with eyes like stars, and with a strange mark upon her wrist? Is it possible I have found for her the mother she has longed for?"

"You know my child, and I find you here!" ejaculated the stranger, in equal agitation and surprise. "But I must not linger here. I dare not—every moment of delay is fraught with deadly peril to myself and to a generous soul waiting for me. You have seen so much that even if your face did not give me faith in you I should have no other alternative but to trust you. Come with me into the secret passage, I beseech you, where, at least, is a little less danger than here; and swear to me once more that you are neither in the Baer nor the Von Schubert interest, or, what is more deadly still, in the royal favour."

"I am an Englishman, or at least I have always believed myself such. I have been educated and reared in England. I was travelling in Germany and was entrapped and detained here that one of these Baers might escape under my name and passport," returned Aubrey, with a little of his indignation at the remembrance still visible in his tone.

"Come," whispered she, and led him gently on through a secret doorway formed by the swinging open of the whole panel against which the portrait hung.

It closed after them noiselessly. Aubrey's taper showed him a narrow corridor, walled on either side, cobweb-hung and damp with mould.

Every now and then there was a short flight of descending steps.

He noticed a burnt match tracking the pathway, then he looked again wonderingly into that face, which he now perceived held marks still of extraordinary beauty.

"Yes," she said, in the careful undertone she had adopted throughout their conversation, "I came alone, with only the faint flicker of a match to guide me along a path I have not trodden for nearly twenty years. Oh, the change—the change! Little did he guess, my Arnold, when he led my playful steps through this secret passage, whose existence was so carefully concealed, in what sore strait it would serve me. Ah, to think how gaily I tripped over these damp stones, dreaming nothing of the horrors and woes that were coming! And how tenderly he supported my steps, and how proudly he assured me that I shared a knowledge that only the Schwarzenburg barons learned when they came into possession of their rights here. Alas, alas! it is a terrible dream, all the horrors that have filled up those years? Shall I wake, indeed, and find him with me again? You are so like him—so like him."

"So like whom, madam? I pray you explain to me what you mean and who you are before I go with you any farther."

"I am Lady Pauline, the wronged Baroness of Schwarzenburg, and you are like my murdered husband, Arnold, baron and lord of this fair Isle and its surroundings."

"They told me you were dead," ejaculated Aubrey, in profound astonishment. "I am sure that Baron Valentin believes you dead."

"I know he does, and all the world beside. I have been buried all these years, hidden away, my child torn from me. Oh, my sufferings and my wrongs are too great to be credible! And yet it is Heaven's truth I tell you. I have escaped his power once, twice, as by a very miracle, and even now his hirelings watch on all sides. But I have risked everything to come hither, and I have secured the treasure hidden here for so many years. And I have found you. Surely I need not fear to trust the rest to Heaven's mercy, although danger waits me behind and before and encompasses me on every side. No, I will not fear," she cried, speaking in low but earnest and agitated accents.

"I am like your husband," repeated Aubrey, his thoughts following the personal interest. "Ah, madam, will it help you to explain for me the doubt and perplexity that overwhelm me?"

"Let us reach the lower corridor, and you shall hear all that I can tell. I must take counsel with the generous man who has risked not only his own life but the comfort and security of his wife and child to help me," she whispered back.

Aubrey fell into silence, following after her swift, unflinching steps as she threaded the doubtful way in front of him.

They reached at length, after a long passage through the dark, close avenues, a small, circular room. A man started up from the stone seat there, and turned a startled face upon Aubrey.

"Do not be alarmed. I have found another friend. I have found one who knows my child. Tell me, I beseech you, about her!—how she looked, what she said!" spoke Lady Pauline, and turned her eager eyes upon Aubrey.

"But, dear lady," interposed Carl, for it was he, "do you forget that imminent danger threatens us? Do you forget that the night, whose moments are so precious in helping us near the port, is passing swiftly?"

She wrung her hands in dismay.

"Should I too pass this providential opportunity of hearing about my daughter? It would be too cruel to lose it."

"Your life is more precious, beside the opportunity to reach England and see her yourself. Our plan is a desperate one at its best," he returned. "However, only knows what will become of us if our escape be discovered before morning. I pray you to think of all that is at stake."

"But he is going home; he is going to England and will see her. I may never reach it. I want him to take her my message, to warn her against Sebastian Schroeder, to tell her of the frightful fate that menaces her."

"Let her tell me, and I will make my way to her daughter, though I find her surrounded by a cordon of dragons!" exclaimed Aubrey, eagerly.

"Yes, let me tell him my whole story, that, should the worst come to me, my daughter may know the truth," implored Lady Pauline.

And in a low, faint, yet sternly controlled voice she related everything to him: from the first to the very last escape.

Aubrey was profoundly moved.

"Who knows but you have been yet farther deceived?" he cried. "I will force Dr. Meutz to speak plainly. Tell me, was Dr. Meutz with you at your daughter's birth?"

"He was," she answered, wonderingly.

"And you have already told me how like I am to your husband, the baron. Look at this."

He bared his wrist, held it up to the flaring light of the fast-consuming taper coil, and looked into her face with wistful, inquiring eyes.

She stood for a moment as if dizzy with all this excitement, pressing her hand against her forehead, then fell into a great flood of tears, and cast herself into Aubrey's arms.

"My son! my own! my Arnold's living, breathing image!" she cried, incoherently, between her sobs.

Aubrey held her close.

"My heart answers you. I feel sure you are right. But tell me how it can be."

"I was insensible to everything that transpired. Alas, alas! I was so helpless, so despairing, so broken-hearted at my husband's terrible fate, and so encompassed by treacherous friends and crafty enemies, what marvel that they deceived me in every way? When I recovered from the fever that so nearly took my life I was told that my twin children were dead at birth. It did not seem strange after all I had endured. I received it for truth. I never questioned it until my captor, a brief time ago, revealed to me, for the sake of an additional torture, that my daughter lived. It gave me new life to attempt escape—new desire to live. What must it be now that I have my son, noble, brave, and worthy, as I am sure, clasped here in my arms? We must surely escape now."

"Yes," cried Aubrey, "we will escape. You have a protector at length. Tell me what were your plans?"

"To get to the nearest port, find our way to an English ship, and appeal to the captain's sympathy," returned the aeronaut. "You see we build all our hopes on England."

"Heaven bless her!" said Aubrey, a soft dew coming into his eyes. "I have been educated as her son. I can never forswear my love, even if my allegiance must be transferred. But with such a powerful enemy I fear such a plan will prove weak and unavailing. How much I would give for a little longer time for reflection."

"We have money enough," said Carl Koepfel, gravely. "It was a blessing indeed that the Jew took those diamonds. If you think it best I can return to my home. It may be her escape will be more readily made without me."

"But that will be returning into the jaws of the lion," said Lady Pauline, anxiously. "I cannot have your life endangered any farther, my generous friend."

"Could you remain here in this secret chamber to-morrow?" returned Aubrey. "I am promised a safe passage for myself. Might I not obtain the same for you?"

"It might be feasible for a strong man like me, but for a delicate lady, who has already undergone so much—if even there were a few comforts here—it would scarcely be practicable," objected Carl.

"It is safe at least. I do not believe a single one of the new inmates is aware of this passage. The thick cobwebs at the entrance showed it had been unvisited for years, and I know how jealously the secret was guarded. My husband took great care to conceal our visit even from the servants. There is one old man, a trusty creature, who loved Arnold far better than his own life. He alone was initiated. He went with us at the time, and Arnold told me that his father had held the same trust. His name was Wirt Womberg. If only he were here!"

Aubrey clasped her hand joyfully.

"He is—a melancholy old man who told me when I came how the Schwarzenburg glories had degenerated. He is here, and trusted, I am sure, by the Von Schubert party, as well as the Baer's family, for he guards my own door. You are sure that he knows of this retreat?"

"Yes, both of the outer and inner entrance. You may trust him with my story fearlessly," answered Lady Pauline.

"Then I am sure it is best for you to remain. He shall manage to get you supplies both of food and bedding. I will go back now and wake him up. I am pretty sure that he sleeps in the little room behind mine. At all events I will find him. The baron will yield to any demand of mine. And keep good hearts. I think your escape shall be safely managed yet."

"Then we will hasten to find your sister," cried Lady Pauline, kissing his hand fondly.

"My sister. The beautiful Leina, whose knight I promised to be—my sister!" whispered Aubrey's heart, sinking with a keen pang of dismay and regret.

But to her he answered, reassuringly:

"Yes, we will find Leina."

(To be continued.)

## THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

### CHAPTER V.

LATE into the night the earl remained in his armchair, his hands idle, but his mind busy with memories of years gone by—years of his youth, sweet times and joyous, and not so far away, either, when he was young and handsome, and full of hope, like this son who had just left the room. Like him, courted and a favourite, the heir of an earldom.

He recalled how he had set forth on a tour of the Continent, after his studies were finished—all the bright, bright days he had spent in gay Paris and sentimental Spain and sunny Italy.

Sunny, indeed, it had proved to him, for there, as he lingered in Naples—having sent for his yacht, on board of which he dreamed away long days of idleness on the blue waters of its lovely bay—he met his destiny.

He had deserted the fair-haired beauties of his country to fall a victim to the first arrow shot from the dark eyes of the Countess Valentinia. He had met her first in one of those delicious homes on the hill-side overlooking the bay. He was invited, with others, to dine with her mother, the Countess Rinaldini. The beautiful drive out of the city—with the cool shadows creeping down stealthily over the broad sunshine which had steeped the plains, the blue waves sparkling far away, the green leaves glistening by the roadside, the sunset air full of

warm odours of rich flowers—had already predisposed the susceptible heart of so young a man to romance and tender dreams of the sweet possibilities which the future held in store for him.

Quite happy, and thinking far less of the company he was going to meet than of the lovely day and the joy of his own fresh spirit, he followed his friends, after descending from their carriages, into the grounds which surrounded one of the most picturesque of Italian villas.

His eye caught the sparkle of fountains, the gleam of oranges, hanging "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," over the showery spray—the blush of roses drooping from their trellises—the shadow of the grand hills beyond—the air of sweetness, luxury, and seclusion which surrounded the place as by an enchanted spell.

"How different this from the fogs of England," he was thinking, when his ear heard the sound of the silvery laughter of ladies mingled with the deeper tones of gentlemen in conversation, and he saw by the moving figures under the trees that the Countess Rinaldini was receiving her guests out of doors, her reception-room being carpeted with grass, treasured with shimmering leaves and glimmered sunlight, and set about with flowers.

"How bright, how charming!" he turned to say to the friend whom he supposed walking by his side; but the friend had strayed aside, and his surprised eye encountered a vision which brought him to a complete pause there on the silver-sanded walk.

Quite near stood a girlish figure dressed in white, one lovely arm, from which the loose sleeve flowed away, thrown up over an antique marble urn, mossy with age and overtopped by scarlet flowers; dark eyes of the softest splendour; red lips, sweet as the sweetest dewy rose; a face of the purest oval; black, glossy, abundant hair; and with all such an air of spirit and tenderness combined, of archness and frolicsome grace, and high-born refinement holding her girlish gaiety in restraint.

The young lord, to whom beauty and refinement were no strangers, was dazzled and held by the unexpected picture.

"I beg your pardon; did you address me, my lord?" she said, hearing him speak and seeing him pause and gaze at her.

She spoke in Italian, and her words melted like liquid gold.

"I might well have been addressing her," he thought, recalling what his expression had been.

He bowed and smiled.

"I have lost my escort," he said, in the same language, "who was to have presented me to the Countess Rinaldini."

"Let me be your conductor," she said, answering his smile. "There is my mother coming to meet you. Mother, this is—"

"Lord Harry Bramblethorpe," he added for her.

"Welcome, Lord Harry: my English guests are always doubly welcome," said the lady, taking and retaining his hand. "My daughter, the Countess Valencia, my lord. Come, we will find your friends."

She led him along, but, seeing him turn and look after the younger countess, she said, laughingly:

"Ah, you prefer a prettier companion. Ah, why cannot women always remain young? Here, Valencia, my daughter, I give my lord into your charge, and see that you do not neglect him, for he is nearly a stranger to the company, and will desire to be made acquainted and entertained."

"I have made the only acquaintance for which I care on this occasion," murmured he, as her mother left them together. "Do not be in haste, I beg, countess, to increase the list of my friends. I am more than satisfied."

She blushed a little, but she also smiled, and in ten minutes they were old friends, standing together, watching the sun set in the golden water, while the dark-green, glossy leaves danced over their heads and the air was heavy with the-breath of all sweet things.

Delicious, immortal evening, new in the experience of this young pair. The wily mother was not unaware of the impression made by her daughter on the wealthy and noble Englishman. Indeed, all of the company were smiling at the evident devotion of the young man. Yet none supposed him so irretrievably in love as he was. He felt that unless he could win this lovely creature to share it with him his northern home would no longer have any charm for him.

It was not until he was in the carriage with his friends returning to the city through the golden moonlight that he learned that this girlish Countess Valencia was a widow.

"A widow!" he gasped. "Why, she cannot be a day over seventeen."

A cold feeling of deadly disappointment struck to his heart.

"Is it possible that you were not aware of it? I forgot how ignorant you are of our society, its gossip, its history. Upon my word, it never occurred to me that you might be paying your atten-

tions under a misconception. You are right about her age; she is just seventeen, my lord. She has been a widow two years. Shall I relate to you the brief story of her marriage?"

"If you please. It doesn't matter. Yes, tell me all," murmured the lover, in a choked voice.

"When a mere child, a little over fourteen years of age, she was induced or compelled by her mother, for political reasons, to marry a man three times her age, almost a stranger to her, and not at all suited to her tastes or feelings."

"You must know that the Countess Rinaldini is a great intriguer in politics—always getting herself and others in trouble. Well, she had not much more than accomplished the marriage when a sudden revolution in our affairs of state drove the bridegroom from the country. He and his compatriots were obliged to flee for their lives. He set sail with them in a small vessel, for America—the ship was wrecked in a storm on the Florida reefs; but three sailors and the first mate were saved to tell the tale, and in six months from the day she stood in the church a bride the Countess Valencia received tidings that she was a widow."

"I do not think she could have felt any grief beyond the shock of knowing of a sudden death; the accident broke for her a galling chain. She, who had been depressed and sad, became again the laughing, arch, high-spirited child, fond of her birds and flowers, careless of men, almost a man-hater, if one might judge by the utter indifference with which she has since treated us. Her mother, quite ready to make the best of a disastrous venture, dropped her sympathies with the outcast party, caused her daughter to resign her husband's name, and he called simply the Countess Valencia. Both have lived in great seclusion at the Villa Rinaldini. As far as the character of the young countess is concerned it is as spotless as snow—a more faultless woman never lived. I speak warmly, for I have known her since she was a babe in her cradle. Her heart is as girlish as ever. You are the first man I have seen who appeared to have touched her romantic fancy. If you are really interested, my lord, I do not see why her former compulsory marriage of a few weeks should be a bar to your mutual happiness."

Severe as was the first feeling of surprise, it was a consolation to the haughty young English nobleman to believe that Valencia had never loved until she met him. She had not. It was clearly a case of love at first sight—the rapid courtship which followed being a season of entrancing romance to both; while their marriage was one of those made in Heaven.

My lord's relatives, although disappointed that he should marry a foreigner, could find no fault with the bride-elect's breeding and birth. The Rinaldini were of a lineage more ancient than the Bramblethorpes—there had been dukes and dukes among their ancestors—the family jewels were splendid and antique—the beauty of the bride undisputed. No serious objection could be urged, yet all the prejudices of his friends were in favour of some fair-haired, calm-tempered English maiden.

The nuptial took place, however, without any difficulty being made on either side. They were celebrated by a Catholic and also Church of England ceremony, so that, as the bridegroom laughingly said, they were doubly tied, and bound to be twice as devoted to each other as ordinary couples.

He brought his bride into the full blaze of the English court, where the severest criticism of envious ladies could find no fault with her. Impulsive and ardent, her impulses of affection were always for her husband and her children; not an Englishwoman in the land had a happier home than this dark-eyed Italian lady's. The great love and harmony existing between the earl and the countess their untiring admiration of each other, the prosperity of their beautiful home, were themes of commendation until death at last severed the golden cord, and the grave came between them.

The earl sat there, shading his eyes from the garish light of the chandelier with one slender, white hand—a hand like a woman's—and those days and years passed over him, with light touches and soft kisses, like a wandering wind of summer.

"So sweet, so sad, the days that are no more."

Then the breeze deepened to a moan, and the sky was dark and the touch of the night was chill and damp; for a great, an awful misfortune had come upon the earl—a misfortune all the more terrible to bear that it must be borne alone, for it was of a nature that he did not dare confide it to his loving and sensitive wife, whose health, about that time, had begun to fail.

That trouble never lifted. In a year or two his wife died. His Valencia, so lovely, so true and loving, had left him for the grave. Fond of pleasure, of an easy temperament, yet the earl could not be otherwise than greatly changed by two such heavy blows. In the prime of his power of mind and body he had come upon a period of idleness. Out of this, of late, he had been passing. Time, the

healer, had soothed the first poignancy of his mourning, and had thrown farther into the background a certain shadow of fear which ever pursued him. His interest in political topics was reviving, and he was induced to go into society with his young daughters, of whom he was as proud as he was fond.

Augusta, so like himself—Clara, so like her mother—Harry, an honest and a bright boy, of whom any parent might be vain. How dear they were to him! How precious to him the high place which they held before the world!

He moaned and murmured to himself like one in pain as he thought of it—for the subject which Harry had introduced with such vehemence had aroused apprehensions which troubled him to the very depths of his soul.

He was startled by a light touch on his shoulder. Looking up, he saw Estelle bending over him with an air of the sweetest solicitude. He was lonely and care-weary just then, and the expression of her face was very pleasant to him.

"Are you ill, my lord?"

"No—I have been thinking over my past life. But what are you doing here, Estelle?—it must be after midnight."

"Nearly one o'clock. I was restless, for some reason; and as I could not sleep I stole down for a book which I was reading this morning. Here it is, open as I left it. It is 'Vanity Fair,' my lord—I daresay you read it years ago. I am fascinated by it, and yet I do not like it or believe in it. There never was a Becky Sharpe in the world like this Becky he has painted. Women are never quite selfish—do you think they are, my lord?"

"In my experience I have found them the opposite."

He was thinking of his warm-hearted Valencia.

Estelle forgot that it was her business to go upstairs with the book. She stood before the earl, all her long, glistening dark-brown hair, which she had taken down in her chamber, floating about her shoulders in the most girlish manner—and, indeed, as she had always been in the house like one of his own daughters, he thought nothing of this carelessness. He did think she looked unusually pretty.

"I dislike to go away and leave you alone with your sad thoughts, my lord. I am sure they are sad, by your eyes. And you have not been as well as usual lately. I have been very much concerned about you. I do not think Augusta has noticed it so much as I—for she has a lover, my lord," with a light laugh; "and now that I am away from papa I have no one to care for but you."

The earl had not felt previously that his children neglected him, but he now began to feel somewhat alighted.

"I was not aware that Augusta had a lover," he remarked.

"Oh, only Mr. Douglass. And Harry has made his selection."

"Indeed—and who?"

"I shall wait for him to make the announcement," she said, smiling.

"And you, Estelle? I daresay you have found a gallant, as well as the rest of them."

"If? Nonsense? I am only a poor rector's portionless daughter. Not but that I have admirers in plenty. But I don't fancy the light-headed young men of the day. I wish I had lived twenty years earlier. Men were more worth winning then."

"You think so?" asked the earl, with a smile.

"I do. The only men of my acquaintance whom I really admire are men in the prime of life. There is some grandeur about a man whose intellect and manners have matured."

She looked at him, not coquettishly, but earnestly and meditatively.

"Perhaps you could like me, then?" he said, suddenly.

The words were more of a surprise to him than they were to her. He had thought of such a thing but once or twice, *en passant*. But she had found him lonely, depressed, craving sympathy.

To him, just then, it seemed enticingly sweet to have this young, bright girl to appreciate him, to keep him company in his lonely hours, to be a nearer and more devoted friend and companion to him than his daughters could be. As she had suggested, they had interests of their own—before long they would marry away from him, and at that period of his life, when most he needed a constant love, he would find himself solitary in the world. He was not quite ready to merge all his own interests in those of his children, dear as they were to him. Why should he not renew his youth? Why not again have a hearthstone and a wife—some one who belonged to him alone, and whom some stranger could not come and beg away from him?

They crowded upon him swiftly—those tempting suggestions. He should never love as he had loved the wife of his youth—he would not pretend to anything but a friendly affection. He desired a companion to keep with him such hours of care as these and to drive away their morbid influences.

Who brighter, or merrier, or wittier, or more bewitching than Estelle? Was she in earnest in saying that she preferred middle-aged gentlemen to the fops of the day? He looked at her eagerly, after what he had said.

She stood drooping and silent. Her eyes were cast down, her cheeks were flushed, her bosom heaved.

"Could you love a man of my age, Estelle?"

She made an effort to answer him, but it was as if shame and agitation prevented her speaking. She brought her hands together pathetically, and, with a mighty persistency of will, at last raised her bright and tear-wet eyes. Never did a maiden appear more timid and love-confused than Estelle at that moment. Her shy, soft glance, her drooped head, her tender blush were perfect.

"You did not wish me to make that application of your words!" he spoke again, afraid lest his self-love had betrayed him.

"Oh, my lord!"

"Well? what is it, Estelle? You would not choose to be my wife?"

"Choose?"—in a soft, thrilling voice, a gleam of rapture lighting up the face which she quickly lifted. "Are you in earnest? Do you give me the privilege? I cannot believe it."

"I am in earnest. If you will, you shall be my dear young wife."

"Your wife! Ah, you are too wise, too honoured, in every way too much my superior! People would say that I was the only gainer. That I did not marry you for love, but because you had a title and I had not. No—no—no!" shaking her head sorrowfully. "I could not bear to have such a construction put upon our union. It would hurt me cruelly, when I only asked a place near the man whom, of all the world, I most honoured, most admired, most loved. Oh, I cannot say it, my lord!" and she broke down, hiding her face in her hands, her dark hair falling like a veil about her in beautiful confusion.

"Did you want to say that you loved me, darling?"

He reached out to her and took her hands from before her face.

"How can I say it!" she murmured, venturing to cast a half-glance at him, "since, if I confess it now, you will immediately begin wondering how long I have been guilty of such boldness, and I shall have to confess more even than you can guess. Do you wonder that I have been so indifferent to young men when you have been my hero for so long?"

"You were hard on the poor curate, Estelle," laughed the earl, suddenly remembering that unhappy man in the midst of his own flattered delight. "I little thought it was for my sake."

She smiled at that—as well she might. More women than one have seen charms in a grave, gray-bearded earl which they could not find in a burning-hearted, fiery-souled young country curate. But it is always with the ointment of flattery that the sex seal up the eyes of wisdom.

"You are smiling, Estelle! Then you really care for me?"

"Will you tire of me if I care for you too much?" was her response.

Then she just lightly brushed back a lock from his forehead.

"My heart has ached for you of late," she said, gently. "You have been worried and not over well. I wish I could do something for you."

The earl had not hitherto realized that his case was so bad, but he now found himself melting with a pleasant self-pity, and finding it very sweet to have some one to administer to him.

"You shall do what you please for me."

"Then I shall send you to bed. It is nearly two o'clock."

"Tell me first, are you to be my wife—and soon?"

"As you please, my lord."

The shining, smiling eyes—how radiant they were! They flashed upon him one look, and the light young form glided away.

"And I never suspected it. Her heart is completely mine!" murmured the earl as he turned on his restless pillow that night. "It may seem a little foolish in me—but she loves me so!"

"And he never suspected me," murmured Estelle, turning as restlessly on hers. "A countess's coronet is mine! I shall be Harry's step-mother—think of that! I can torment him, and at the same time enjoy my coronet!"

(To be continued.)

THE house in which Pope's father carried on the business of a haberdasher in Plough Court, Lombard Street, is being pulled down. A similar fate has just befallen the house in which J. M. W. Turner's father was a hairdresser, in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden.

A SMALL bijou residence, No. 4, Seasmore Place, Mayfair, London, held under the Dean and Chapter

of Westminster for thirty years unexpired at 8l., and stabling held for eighteen years at 30l. per annum, was disposed of recently at the Auction Mart, by Mr. George Gouldsmith, for the very large sum of 15,800l.

#### SIGHTS AMONG THE CINDERS.

SCENE—The Domestic Hearth.—EDWIN and ANGELINA.

Ang. Edwin, how seriously you are staring into the fire. A penny for your thoughts. But I guess them: you look as if you were thinking of the price of coal.

Ed. Yes, indeed I am. Thirty-five shillings a ton, and see how it burns away! You have read my thoughts indeed.

Ang. How often, when one is thinking of a thing, the other thinks of the same thing just at the same time. How nice it is to sympathize so!

Ed. Delightful! I daresay now our sympathy is so perfect that you can see with my eyes too.

Ang. See what?

Ed. Things in the fire.

Ang. What things?

Ed. You have heard of faces in the fire?

Ang. Do you see any?

Ed. I see two faces, and very wry faces they look—yours and mine. But I see other things as well. The eye makes out all sorts of objects in those glowing embers—those red-hot coals at five-and-thirty shillings a ton. The price of meat too—fourteenpence or more a pound—makes them appear all the plainer. Curious things!

Ang. Make me see them, dear (puts her arm round his neck).

Ed. Well now, there—look. What does that seem like? I make out a sort of head-dress, or bonnet, with a lot of ribbons and flowers.

Ang. Um—yes. Now I look at it certainly it does look very much like a bonnet—and, by the way, I want one.

Ed. There is a piano.

Ang. Well, so there is, and it's very odd, for don't you think our old "cottage" is almost done for?

Ed. There is a pair of kid gloves. One, two, three, four—ever so many pairs of kid gloves.

Ang. How very funny for me to see such things! Men so seldom think about dress.

Ed. Once a year at least the married ones do—at Christmas. I see lots of dresses in the fire. Don't you?

Ang. Oh, yes, now I look! I can distinguish a black silk very plain. Oh! and a merino, and a velvet. And in the middle of that very bright place in the cinders there's a white satin, as clear as anything I ever saw; and it's trimmed with lace—oh, so lovely!

Ed. Jewels too, see?

Ang. Yes, and jewels too. There's a bracelet, there's a brooch, there's a necklace, there's a lot of rings with rubies and brilliants.

Ed. There's an evening party—don't you see?

Ang. Ah! so there is! What a number! When you've fancied the dresses and things you easily fancy the people wearing them.

Ed. There's an opera-box, it seems to me.

Ang. Well, after a time one could imagine it almost.

Ed. There's the sea-side.

Ang. Where? I don't quite seem to see that.

Ed. Don't you? Look there, then. Can't you see the Continent?

Ang. Well, the Continent, they say, is always on fire. But I can't say that I see it exactly. Why do you make that face? Oh, Edwin, you are joking now.

Ed. Quite the reverse, my dear. It's all too serious a prospect. I see too plainly, in the fire, the sacrifices we shall have to make this year.

Ang. What sacrifices?

Ed. Sacrifices to the coal-merchant and the butcher, and all the dealers in provisions and necessities of life. Sacrifices of superfluities to be enabled to pay our way.

Ang. Superfluities. Oh, so these are superfluities, are they, that you see in the fire? Bonnets and kid gloves, and proper things to appear in, and change of air and scene, and all the little elegancies of life—those things you call superfluities, do you? Those are the superfluities you see in the fire, are they? Now I'll tell you what I see. A box of cigars—

Ed. Oh, I say!

Ang. Nasty, good-for-nothing cigars, at fourpence and sixpence apiece, burning away money. And claret—there, I see bottles of claret and other wine, and there's your and some more of you, dining together at your club, and then again at Greenwich—look at the whitebait and the punch! Oh, there's a horse-race, too, the Derby, not Ascot, and there's a gun, and there's a game certificate, and some setter dogs, and there's all manner of real superfluities which men could very well do without, and sacrifices those instead of making sacrifices of their poor wares' things that they can't go without; and you're

a good-for-nothing, selfish wretch, and I will pinch your ear (suits the action to the word).

Ed. Oh! Oh! Oh!

(Curtain.)

—Punch's Pocket Book, 1873.

#### SCIENCE.

COMPRESSED AIR.—Air was compressed by Professor Tyndall, by means of a column of water 260 feet high, to one eighth of its original volume (120 lbs. to the square inch) and then allowed to escape. As it rushed out it expanded so violently and caused such an intense cold that the moisture in the room was congealed in a shower of snow, while the pipe from which the air issued became bearded with icicles.

NEW PROCESS OF BLEACHING ANIMAL TEXTILE FABRICS.—MM. Samal and Berousson have recently patented a new method of bleaching animal textile fabrics by means of a feeble solution of the sulphurets of sodium and potassium. These products act in a remarkable manner in removing the gum in preparing silk and in scouring wool. In practice, in the first case, the bath should be boiling; in the second, the temperature of the alkaline sulphuret should not exceed 50 deg. C. The more difficult it may be to remove the gum and prepare the silk the less the solution should be sulphuretted: in some instances the proto-sulphuret may be employed. The inventors have also used in the same manner the aluminates of soda and potash.

INOCULATION WITH DEAD BLOOD.—It is well known that surgeons are often seriously injured by accidentally cutting themselves with instruments that have been recently used for dissecting purposes. The wounded part swells, and mortification often ensues, necessitating amputation and sometimes causing death. In order to determine the poisonous properties of this putrid blood M. Davaine has published the result of several experiments made upon rabbits. The liquid used was the blood of an ox that had been ten days slaughtered. This, by subcutaneous injection, he administered to his subjects in varying quantities, obtaining by successive dilutions with water the most infinitesimal attenuations. Killing one animal he would take its infected blood and force the same into the veins of another, and so on until he reached what he terms the twenty-fifth generation. On this last experiment he says: "Four rabbits received respectively one trillionth, one ten-trillionth, one hundred trillionth, and one quadrillionth of a drop of blood from a rabbit belonging to the preceding generation that had died from the effects of a one-trillionth dose. Of the four, but one animal died—that which received the one ten trillionth. It appears, then, that the limit of the transmissibility of the poison in the rabbit reaches the one trillionth part of a drop of decayed (septic) blood."

THE DETERMINATION OF HIGH TEMPERATURES BY SOUND.—At a recent meeting of the Lyceum of Natural History Professor Mayer delivered an interesting discourse upon the determination of high temperatures in furnaces by sounds—describing some original researches of his own, and illustrating his remarks by several effective experiments. In order to understand Professor Mayer's conclusions it is necessary to briefly review the laws of vibrations in elastic media. If a tuning-fork be set in motion, its vibrations are transmitted to the air, and the latter vibrates in unison, making the same number of movements per second, whether 500 or 50,000. To comprehend the reason, said the speaker, imagine a sphere of delicate membrane containing air of the same elasticity as that which surrounds it. Suppose this sphere to contract and expand, say one hundred times per second; for each expansion there will be a corresponding condensation of the shell of air next to the surface of the globe; the air being elastic this condensation is transmitted to the shell of air which envelops the first shell, thence to another beyond, and so on. Conversely, if the sphere contract, a rarefaction of its immediate envelope of air takes place, which rarefaction is also transmitted outwards, each succeeding shell diminishing in density in turn. These motions of course are mere undulations, similar to waves of water, or of light in its passage through ether, the air taking up the form of the vibrations, transmitting it to the ear, whence it passes to the brain and is perceived. A tuning-fork when vibrated in regular motion leaves when its point is drawn over the surface of a piece of smoked glass a sinuous curve. This curve is a symbol of the condition of the air, and from it, if highly magnified and suitably divided, formulas can be deduced.

THE FIRST ENGLISH RESIDENT IN JAPAN.—The grave of William Adams, the first English resident in Japan, has just been discovered near Tsurumi. The record says that he was born between Rochester and Chatham, served as a naval pilot in Queen Eliza-

both's reign, and sailed in 1596 in one of the five ships from Holland to Japan, which his vessel alone reached in 1598, the other ships perishing. Of his own crew but four survivors, including himself, were fit for anything, and the ship being condemned as unseaworthy, Adams became a resident, married, and lived till 1634.

## ELGIVA;

### OR, THE GIPSY'S CURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Snapt Link," "Evelyn's Plot," "Sybil's Inheritance," &c., &c.

#### CHAPTER XLIII.

Vain, transitory splendour, could not all  
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.

How little is recked of the past struggles, the hopes, and fears of the departed spirit when the last solemn obsequies are performed for the silent and senseless corpse!

The friends and acquaintances who assembled at Chetwode Castle to do honour to the pompous funeral rites, and, it may be, to see and to pay homage to the young and lovely heiress of the departed nobleman, were little cognisant—ay, or regardless either—of the sorrows of his last years, the sins of his youth, or the agonies of his repentance.

It was enough that he left behind him a noble name, large inheritance, and a fair daughter to grace the pomp and power to which she succeeded. Thus, when the groups were assembled about the corpse had been consigned to the vault that already held so many of the race, and the refreshments had been handed round, and the more intimate and important of the company requested to attend the reading of the will in the library, there was decidedly more curiosity and excitement than solemnity of awe or even semblance of grief among the sable-clad mourners, and the most memorable event of the morning was decidedly the entrance of the beautiful young heiress to the apartment where the last ceremony of the day was to be performed.

Enough had transpired of the strange events of the last few months to wind up expectation to the highest pitch, and when at last the door opened and a tall, slight figure entered, clad in deep mourning, though with but little of the "livery of woe" in her features, the exchange of glances and murmur of voices were irrepressible and distinct.

Beautiful exceedingly she was—proud, cold, statue-like, perhaps, in her bearing and expression, but still with a bearing and features that justified the full her claims to high birth and blood.

"Very like; yes, every inch of her a Chetwode," was whispered about; and as she took her place after a cold though graceful bow to the audience it was impossible to refuse her the admiration and homage that are due to the majesty of youth and beauty when coupled with a rare, distinguished station and power that are seldom extended to one so inexperienced.

But at length all was hushed, and Mr. Conyers, the lawyer of the late nobleman, began to open his parchments and proceed to the business of the hour.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he commenced, "it is always a painful task to read the last wishes of the dead, even under the most ordinary circumstances, but in the case immediately before me even more devolves on me than I had expected when the late Count Arnheim's bequests were made and his will drawn up. That will is virtually null and void, though it is, by the last orders of my client, not to be destroyed or set aside. But it will be enough for me to state now that it contained the usual provisions in testaments of such nature. There are sundry bequests to friends, legacies and provisions for servants and dependents, then the residue was bequeathed to his daughter, then supposed to be the Lady Elgiva, long known to the neighbourhood and the count's friends as his only and beloved child.

"But singular and romantic events and changes have occurred, to which it would not be desirable to refer, more especially in the presence of the Lady Amice. And since that change was known, since the unravelling of the remarkable fraud of which the Lady Elgiva was the innocent instrument, Count Arnheim at once altered, or rather nullified the provisions that had been made under such different circumstances. All that need be done in the present instance is to give publicity to a document that I had the special instructions of my deceased client to read to the assembly which might be gathered at his obsequies."

Here Mr. Conyers paused and drank a glass of water as if to refresh his energies for the task, and there was a slight murmur, as is so often perceptible after some especial tension of silence among a crowded group.

Then he resumed:

"The document I am about to read is a kind of codicil or pendant to the will of the count, and goes on thus:

"Since devising and bequeathing the above property and possessions to her whom I believed to be my own dear and beloved daughter and heiress, and to others who I considered had a claim on my remembrance, strange and stirring events have occurred. An heir, long lost, appeared, and took possession of most willingly yielded possessions. Then—woe and misery—he disappeared, and to all human belief is numbered with the dead. And oh, the very treasure of my heart, my darling, my beloved daughter, was torn from me as an alien to my blood and race, while another and an unknown heiress claimed my love and heritage. But so long as the cloud hangs over the fate of the Earl Ludovic, so long as my Elgiva's prospects are in such complete obscurity and darkness, I do not feel that it is right or just to make any absolute arrangements for that which may not be mine to bestow.

"Earl Ludovic could justly claim the ample recovery of his estates and their revenue for long years back, should he ever return to receive his own, and the least that I can do is to abstain from any further spoliation of his property.

"I therefore order and command that for the space of a year and a month no change whatever shall be made in the state and arrangements of matters at Chetwode-Arnheim, or any other places over which I have power or possession, but that the revenue shall be drawn and appropriated as usual without any waste or extravagance or abstraction whatever.

"And, lastly, I ordain that for two years from that date no provisions of my will shall be carried into effect, although the Lady Amice may then consider herself privileged to use her own discretion as to the expenditure and arrangements of the domain inherited by her, which I trust will be performed according to my known wishes and her sense of right and justice. And I appoint my old and trusted solicitor, Mr. Philip Conyers, Alfred Sandys, Esq., of the Mount, and Sir Francis Vere, of Water Grange, to watch over the strict and faithful execution of this my last will and testament."

There was silence for a few minutes. Amice was too disguising a veil for her emotions to be read. But the bosom beneath the crape rose, and heaved vividly, either from indignation or from grief.

Mr. Sandys was the first to speak.

"Then are we to conclude from that codicil that the late count did not deliver over any authority to his daughter, the Lady Amice, for another year, Mr. Conyers?" he questioned.

"Precisely so, sir," was the reply. "And it will be incumbent on us as executors to see that such wishes are attended to. The documents, receipts, etc., that have been hitherto signed by the count will have to receive our endorsement till the year is over. Then Lady Amice will receive that power, though still with limitations as to its use."

"Humph! a very singular and rather unpalatable arrangement," asserted Sir Francis Vere. "It really does seem so unlikely that the earl can be still in life, and—"

"Excuse me, Sir Francis, but the law never can recognise any man's death till seven years are past, unless some proof is given of the fact," interrupted Mr. Conyers.

"Certainly it is very difficult to account for a young man with such advantages in life choosing to absent himself from his friends and chosen bride and rich heritage, but still the count has judged rightly in what he has done, and I shall exert myself to the utmost to shorten the time of probation by endeavouring to ascertain in a measure the real truth."

Amice had hitherto sat in motionless silence, but now she rose with a mien that had double haughtiness in its carriage.

"Courtesy surely demands that the affairs of my family and my father's will should not be made the subject of gossip," she said, coldly. "If any one has the right to complain it is myself, and I am silent."

She bowed coldly round the room as she spoke, and moved from the apartment as slowly and stately as one walking in a trance.

But no sooner was she out of sound and sight of the assembled group than she flew up the stairs to her own apartments with the impetuous speed of a hunted deer.

The door was closed behind her, and the first outburst of her fury vented in the clasped hands and stamping foot, that spoke of the rage within, ere she perceived that she was not alone.

There was the same dark form that had so often appeared in the various episodes of her fate, and that seemed to have an instinctive anticipation of any agitation or excitement that rendered her presence at once expedient, though it might be hateful.

"Leave me! I hate you! You are the evil genius that haunts my fate," she exclaimed. "I believe it was your influence that worked this infamous

plan, and made me a tool and cypher for such an intolerable result. Better have left me as I was than brought this mortification and disappointment on me in the very moment of success. Oh, I say, go—at least, I have power in my own castle to order its inmates."

"Foolish girl," said Marian, calmly regarding the excited girl with an air of superiority that might have belonged rather to a parent than a domestic. "How little you comprehend your true position or the interests you have at stake. Did you trust me as that poor, injured, noble girl would have done had I aided her as I have aided you then your conduct and your feelings would perhaps insure far different results. But as it is it is needful that I should keep a mastery over you, for your own sake as well as that of others whose fate is in a measure dependent on your own."

"Mastery!" repeated Amice, in tones of scorn. "What should there be of mastery over the heiress of Chetwode and Arnheim? It is a strange idea assuredly."

"Not more strange than true," returned Marian. "Child, I tell you that your destiny is as much in my keeping as in that of fate itself. I could at any moment tear your possessions from your keeping and restore you to the obscurity from which you have emerged."

"You told me once before that I am the daughter of the Count of Arnheim now dead—then wherefore do you drop these mysterious hints?" returned Amice. "There can be but one obstacle in the way of my ultimately enjoying my heritage—the return of the earl whose death is suspected," she added, in a low tone.

"Which would be simply a miracle," was Marian's reply, "and in which I have no more belief than in the apparitions of ghosts and goblins. No, I speak of far other things when I say that I can govern your destiny, and that it is folly, danger, destruction for you to tempt your fate."

"What do you want?" returned Amice, sullenly. "I am hemmed in and governed and controlled on every side. It is little use being an heiress if this is to be the end of it. I had more power and freedom as a gipsy girl, Harold Farino's petted child."

"It may be more happiness," returned the woman, sadly. "Yes, the change perhaps is as evil for you as for Elgiva. But for the waywardness of human hearts it might never have been. Ludovic would have been in his rightful rank, and Elgiva a fair and honoured princess. Alas, alas! It is evil to meddle with the passions and caprices of man, even when we can see the wisdom and the necessity of the course we adopt."

She spoke with meditative sadness rather than as addressing herself to her companion.

And Amice, engrossed as she was with her own mortification and perplexities, scarcely heeded her words.

"What do you wish me to do?" she asked, again, doubtfully. "I can at least consider the course I should adopt if you explain yourself more clearly."

"I would have you be loyal and true if it is in your nature," returned Marian. "You have one who is worthy of esteem and love ready to wed you so soon as you can give him your hand. When six months are over you can fairly consent to a quiet bridal, if no adverse influence intervene. Remain here in patience for that period, and then you will be safe from any actual injury or fall from your high estate, should even the dead return to life, and Ludovic appear to claim his heritage."

"Then he would have no alternative, he must at least in justice share his rank and wealth with me," returned the girl, "after disappearing so capriciously from his betrothed, Elgiva."

"Do you suppose he did not love her, or that he has ceased to love her now?" asked Marian, significantly.

"I suppose he would not marry a gipsy girl when once he knew his real rank," she said, scornfully.

Marian raised her hands in deprecating pity. "Blind, blind, blind," she exclaimed. "Child, I tell you he had better wed the humblest daughter of the tribe than marry Amice of Arnheim or tempt his fate by an alliance with one of that doomed race. Dismiss such a fancy from your mind then, Amice, and accept your fate as the wife of Lord Easton with gratitude and humility, for it is your sole safeguard and resource."

"Well, I will think—I will consider," returned the girl, sullenly. "It is rather hard that an heiress should be driven to accept about the first man who has had the chance of seeing and courting her, and it is very probable that you are but carrying out the plans which seem to be bent on crushing me on all hands. If Lord Easton pleases me and satisfies my ideas of what is due to my claims, I shall marry him, as you suggest. But, if not, Lady Amice of Arnheim will scarcely find it hopeless to obtain a suitor even under the humiliation of her father's absurd and

impotent will. Now you have my answer, and I wish to be left in peace."

Marian waited for a brief moment, as if doubting whether to urge farther her cause, and then she turned to depart.

"Unhappy child of a guilty race," she said, "it is enough. You, at least, will not redeem the nature that folly and guilt have made a sort of heritage, nor remove the curse that was pronounced long years since. Alas, alas! that the good and gentle and fair are within its power as well as the froward and proud descendant of the blinded and perverse author of the long and relentless ban that has hung like a cloud of gloom and grief on Arnheim and its race."

She passed from the room as she spoke, without even giving time for Amice to arrest her progress.

And the orphan was left alone with the fear and the indignation that she was alike impotent to altogether leave and too perverse to remove or avert.

Marian had spoken truly. It seemed as if some effluence in past days had stultified the whole nature and feelings of the race, and that obstinacy and pride were for them an inevitable and fatal heritage.

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

No product here the barren hills afford  
Saw man and steel, the soldier and his sword.  
No vernal bloom these torrid rocks array;  
But winter, lingering, chills the lap of May.  
No sighs, no woe the mountain's breast,  
But meteoric glare and stormy glooms invest.

"Our journey is well nigh at an end at last, my young sir," said the stolid German who had been the close and never-failing attendant of the ill-fated Juan for the fortnight that had elapsed since he was released from his captivity in the living tomb he had inhabited. "And you won't be sorry I dare say to slip off that cumbersome gear and be yourself again."

The young earl was indeed habited in a most disgusting but unpleasant costume for one so young and active.

Heavy monkish robes and the most ample and ponderous of cloaks gave extraordinary amplitude to his slight figure, while a false beard, of a nondescript colour that might have passed either for the most tow-like brown or dawning gray, gave so total a change to his countenance that it would have been almost impossible to have recognized the finely shaped contour or well-cut and youthful features which indicated in their pristine state high descent and noble nature, but which were now simply lugubrious and almost repulsive in the monk-like disguise.

Indeed the sufferings of the last few months had given an unnatural pallor and printed some premature lines on the young earl's brow and cheeks, which perhaps did him good service in the present instance, albeit they detracted from the brilliant handsomeness of his youthful aspect.

"It is not for one whose life has been saved to complain," returned the young nobleman, sadly. "The miracle that preserved it can only be attributed to a powerful and well-arranged agency of which you, my good Karl, have been a most trusty and kindly instrument."

The broad face of the impassive German did not relax in its composed stolidity, but yet there was a somewhat more kindly and respectful tone than before in his voice as he replied:

"Well, I'll confess you are worth what's been done for you in one sense, for you've been brave and uncompromising as ever had could be, though there's marks on your face that can't be mistaken, but I ask no questions, mind you, nor want any answer as to what's gone by. What's more, you've got a shade more life hue on your face than before we started, and the forest air will, maybe, do the rest. It would be a pity if the prince be disappointed after all the trouble he has taken. We're not far from his domains now," he added as they stopped at the turn of the road where the paths lay at the entrance of two hills between which lay a deep, lonely valley, in which was an exhausted slate quarry.

In the valley wound a river that dashed wherever it could find an outlet over groups of rocks, which promised one day to reward its perseverance by becoming its bed.

The noise of these picturesque cascades was the sole sound that broke the silence, save when an eagle cast himself into the air, or a deer, emboldened by the silence and solitude, bounded away to find new pasture, without fear of man to disturb its meal.

Juan gazed round with a species of awe that for the moment crushed every other feeling as they walked along, till at last a more startling object arrested his attention.

It was an ancient castle, standing on a rock, with a massive tower and some solid walls that spoke of the strength of its original masonry and the force that must have been necessary to reduce it to the degree of desolation that it now presented.

There were gray lichen and moss and clustering ivy on the solid wall, imparting to the bricks

that remained a youth that was all borrowed, for the very origin of the building was wrapped in mystery. Juan paused and regarded the romantic dwelling with unmistakable interest.

"What a splendid castle that must have been," he said, musingly. "It must have been a place of almost impregnable safety in its old power and strength."

"It will be a place of safety for you now, young sir," said the man, calmly. "That is your destination, and there, if you be wise and true, you will be free from any alarm of disturbance. Few ever come in this direction," he said, gazing round at the lone solitude that surrounded the place. And, if any intruders appeared, it would be easy for you to baffle their search by the way I will show you. And, hark ye," he continued, in his harsh, guttural German, that was scarcely intelligible to Juan, notwithstanding his wanderings in other lands. "You'll remember the past, and keep your oath; or it will be worse for you at last than at first, I can promise you."

Juan looked with a bewildered gaze at the stolid guide.

"What do you mean? What is to be the upshot of all this?" he said. "I have given my word to Prince Charles, and whatever might betide it would never be broken."

"All right, all right," returned Karl. "It's no business of mine. I have but to do my duty—as my father and grandfather, ay, and great-grandfather have done—to the princely house of Mortz. But I've been too long with you, and you're too young and too frank for me to let you go to ruin, young sir. And it's for that I bid you beware and not be tempted to break your pledge."

"And is that to be my dwelling, Karl?" asked the young man, anxiously.

The German nodded.

"And alone, alone?" asked Juan, again glancing round with an involuntary shudder at the lone and rugged solitude.

The man paused for a moment.

"Would you rather have a companion?" he resumed.

"It is dreary, very dreary, after all I have gone through of late," was the answer. "Can you not stay with me? I am almost ashamed of my weakness, but I shrink from this tomb-like mansion," he added, half-hesitatingly.

"Poor lad, poor lad," was the reply. "It is terrible to see the effect on one as young and brave and strong as you, but it teaches a lesson," he continued. "The fearful power of the memory and the heart cannot be resisted by the solitary and the frank and young. Whatever, whoever you may be, young sir, take the warning from one who is trusty and true—or you would not have been put in my keeping—wait and watch, and put your faith in your innocence and your truth. I have been the servant of the prince from my earliest childhood, and he is not false, even if he be overbearing and proud. He will not betray you if you keep his counsels and never reveal what you may see or hear in the prison-house, as you call this ancient and venerable stronghold."

"Then there are secrets?" asked Juan, eagerly, in his youthful buoyancy forgetting for the moment the former's injunctions in the remarkable hints that were given him by the German.

But the next moment Karl had resumed his walk, without answering the eager query.

"Wait and see," he said, "only wait and see. You will have but that ordeal for a brief space. And if you believe my words that speak truth it is a light punishment after what you have suffered."

The observation was too true to be rebutted, and the young man followed in obedient silence.

And yet there was a hopeless dreariness in the proposal before him that had perhaps a more depressing influence than all he had hitherto endured.

He had borne up bravely under pain and suffering, he had summoned a manly fortitude even while the icy house of death had surrounded him, and only the memory of the lovely and the loved kept him from despair.

But it was different now.

The excitement was over, the hope and the remembrance had equally passed away.

His great sufferings had shaken his nerves, as only superhuman courage could have resisted.

Now the loneliness of his new abode, the consciousness that he might die unwept, unknown, unfriended, that he could not escape either the bond of his plighted word or the dreariness of his dwelling sank his spirits to the lowest point of sadness.

And all humiliated and silent and helpless the lover of Elgiva, the lord of Arnheim, Earl of Chetwode, high born, rich, envied, beloved, was conducted by a foreign serf to the foreign abode that was to be his sole refuge and shelter from death and suffering and secret revenge.

It was a melancholy idea, a dark and depressing prospect for the young and the brave.

But Lena had prayed and argued, and Elgiva was still as a star in the distance to cheer the gloom, and the buoyancy of youth and the high spirit of a long-descended and brave race sustained him in the trial.

With a firm step and calmer front he followed his conductor over the broken, rugged rocks and the capricious windings of the narrow stream till they were at the portals of the Castle of Lintrecht.

#### CHAPTER XLV.

Hope on, hope ever; though the day be dark  
The sweet sunbeams may smile on thee to-morrow.

Thou art lonely there's an eye will mark  
Thy loneliness and guerdon all thy sorrow;  
With nose to echo back thy thought or love thee;  
Cheer up, poor heart, thou dost not beat in vain.

"You asked me but now whether you would be absolutely alone?" said Karl as they entered the gloomy portal of what had evidently been the scarp of the powerful stronghold. "And I," he continued, "did not then satisfy you, since my business was rather to fulfil my mission of bringing you hither in safety than replying to your questions, and preparing you, it might be, for an alarm and rebellion to what was necessarily before you. Now, if you are determined and patient in your course of action, it is enough. I am free—may, bound to satisfy you on the point you question. If it is any comfort to you to know it, let it be your consolation that you will have one near you even more to be pitied, and far older in suffering than yourself, as your companion."

"Then it is a prison, a place of confinement?" said the young man, shuddering.

"A place of safety and shelter," returned Karl, coolly. "Your companion has found it so, or he would not have been living now. But," he added, suddenly stopping and facing the young man with steady firmness—"but you remember your bond, young sir, you will neither ask questions nor answer them."

"Not so as to give information that might be hurtful," returned Juan, calmly. "I will not tell my name nor history, and anything that I may hear shall be as a sealed book to me. More than that I did not engage to the prince, nor will I promise to you or any one," he added, firmly.

"Right, right," replied Karl. "It is good—good to find a brave spirit in youth. Come, we shall see what is waiting for us, and the end of our long journey is pleasant and satisfactory to the tired and wayworn."

He led the way into the interior of the building as he spoke, and Juan followed with a sensation of interest and curiosity that for the time swallowed up more imminent and personal interests.

It was arched and vaulted on the "ground floor" as it might be termed, and ascended by a winding staircase to an apartment on each landing, the first of which seemed only rudely furnished with actual necessities as a kind of kitchen or repository for the inhabitants who might dwell in the lone stronghold.

But the next had a different aspect.

Warm, thick carpets covered the floor, and the old oak chairs were of a shape and character to permit and even invite repose.

In the corner nooks, almost like an alcove, stood a heavily draped couch, and in the answering one were conveniences for washing and a large if simply shaped glass hung to the wall.

"There," said Karl, "is your apartment for the time you remain here. Presently I shall show you another mode of egress from it that will stand you in good stead—perhaps in case of need. Now will you follow me to make the acquaintance of the sole companion, save one humble attendant whom you will see and know for many a day to come?"

Juan was weary and exhausted with his long travel, but he could not resist the behest, and indeed his own curiosity and inclination led him on to the introduction that might so largely affect his future life.

Karl resumed the ascent, and, after a somewhat longer interval, stopped again, and held up his hand in warning to prevent the young man from following his steps too quickly.

He entered an apartment that appeared to be immediately over that intended for Juan, and the young man caught the sound of his voice in deliberate and he thought soothing accents, which were replied to in fuller and older tones by some tenant of the chamber.

Then Karl reappeared and beckoned Juan to enter, which was quickly and eagerly obeyed by the mystified young earl.

The room was even more spacious than that appropriated to his own use, and the belongings more ample and more luxurious in their nature than his own furniture in the new abode.

There was a luxurious couch, placed by a blazing wood fire, and some shelves with books, and on the mantelpiece a clock, whose monotonous tick-tick was the sole break in the silence of the chamber.



[THE EVIL SHADE.]

Juan's eyes rapidly scanned all these particulars and then rested with anxious eagerness on the more interesting figure of the tenant of the room—the man who was to be his comrade for so many long days and weeks, and possibly years.

It was a fine but wasted countenance that met his view—features that had been well defined and noble, but were now too sharp and haggard to present any but the remains of former attractions, and with an expression which spoke volumes of suffering and patient, remorseful sadness.

He was reclining on the couch, wrapped in a large fur skin, as if the weather was too chill for his thinly covered frame, and did not even attempt to move on their entrance, though he gazed with a wild eagerness on the new comer.

"Well, meinher, how goes it?" asked Karl, in kindly accents. "You have the air of better health than when I last saw you. Is it not so?"

"No, no, no," returned the solitary, in broken tones that had lost the music of their once rich tones that their accent indicated. "I can never be better—never. Why do I live—I the lone, desolate, unhappy one, to whom days are a burden? Save—perhaps for one object—one," he pursued, rather to himself than his companion.

"That will soon be remedied now," continued Karl, cheerily. "I have brought you a companion, who needs shelter and quiet like this, and who I expect will make you like life once more—only under certain rules, certain rules, meinher, that you know and understand well. Now, Juan, please to advance and make your reverence to the Honourable Graf."

Juan obeyed, scarcely noticing the title given to his new acquaintance, a distinction that he knew was too common in Germany not to be assigned at times, even in sport.

But his mind was touched with compassion for the unfortunate sufferer whose fate was so nearly resembling his own.

"Have you been so long alone then that you are weary of the solitude?" he asked, gently.

"Yes, for years—many years," he replied, though Karl's keen eyes seemed to question the information that might be given in the reply. "But it cannot be long now for me. But you, you are young, are you not?" he added, gazing curiously at the contrast that Juan's appearance so strangely furnished between youth and age.

"There, you may cast off your wraps, and appear in your natural guise now, young sir," said Karl, seeing that Juan hesitated. "It has been very cold, Graf," he added, turning to the older man, "and the young gentleman has been ill, so we have taken every precaution for his safety you see."

With the eager inquisitiveness and wonder of a

child the recluse watched the transformation that a brief interval effected in Juan's aspect.

The cloak, coat and hood were cast on the floor, then the hated and disguising beard was stripped from the noble young face, and he wore once again the handsome and noble though pale and wasted countenance of other days.

The recluse gazed at him in simple wonder and half-bewildered alarm.

"Have I seen you before?" he said. "Have I seen you before? Speak."

Juan glanced in half-pitying kindness at the startled features that examined his so earnestly.

"No," he said, "no. It is impossible. I have never seen you before, my good sir, never."

"Then it must have been in a dream—a dream," exclaimed the "Graf," musingly. "I can see it all so plainly. Yes, the look, the eyes and the voice seem so familiar to me. But perhaps I am going mad," he said, with piteous helplessness of tone. "They say so, you know, and it is no wonder—no wonder," he ejaculated, with deep pathos in his sighing groan that seemed to come from his very heart.

"No, not a bit," said the German. "You're worth half a dozen of such as are mad. This young man's face is not such an uncommon one as not to come in a man's dreams sometimes or to have been seen in your lifetime. However there will be plenty of time for all that to be settled while you're together. Now we shall be glad of something to eat. Do you know where's Gretchen, Graf?"

The recluse scarcely took his eyes from Juan's face as he replied:

"She will be here in half an hour. See," he added, pointing to the timepiece. "That tells how the hours go, and then the days, and the weeks, and years. Do you know," he continued, with a half-childish laugh, "what I do whenever I wind up that clock?"

"Give it a twist, I suppose," said Karl, though his voice had a touch of strange pity in it.

"Yes, yes, but then I make a notch in that piece of wood, and that tells me the weeks as they go by, and then I make a deeper one at a month, and cut it up after a year. And now," he went on, "there are eighteen—ay, nearly nineteen pieces I have cut. I counted them only yesterday, and wondered whether I should add another to the list, or whether I should die before this one is gone."

"No, I've brought what will prolong your life," said the German. "There'll be company for each. But, mark me, there must be honour and truth, or the hand that protects you will be worthless, and then fearful punishment can no longer be averted. Methinks I need scarcely repeat the warning," he continued, with a significant glance at Juan.

"And when will you return? When shall we see or hear from the outer world?" asked the young man.

"Once in three months I shall visit you. In the meantime you must confine yourself to this old tower, only taking air and exercise when the imperfect light may defy discovery," he said. "And remember that even the prince's power could not save you again, nor would he himself be free from danger if his deed were made public."

There was some alleviation in the bare idea of seeing some human face at stated intervals that would connect that dreary solitude with the outer world, and Juan's smile of gratitude was a mingling of sadness and relief.

"Now for something to eat," continued the German, whose mind was perhaps not so entirely engrossed with the painful circumstances that surrounded him as to be unconscious of more bodily cravings.

"I'll go and find old Gretchen. It is no use calling," he added with a laugh as he disappeared.

"It's inexpressible happiness to know that you are here," said the recluse, seizing Juan's hand in his and clasping it with touching fervour. "Oh, if you knew what it is to be alone till all is like a mist and the brain whirls in helpless confusion! You will not be angry—you will not leave me if I am foolish and weak?" he added. "It was not so once. Better, perhaps, if it had. But that is gone, and surely atoned long since."

"Hush!" said the young man, firmly. "Let us be true to our promise, and not betray by word or sign what has brought us here, my good friend. We shall comfort each other and wait for Heaven's help to deliver us, if it is its will. But for the rest our lips are closed by a vow that it would be worse than perjury to break."

"Yes, yes; and I will not risk losing you," said the Graf, in a terrified tone, as if the misery was imminent. "It would kill me or take all my senses, now that I have a human being to speak to once more, if it were to vanish like all else."

"But are you quite alone here?" said Juan, in surprise. "Surely you have some one to attend to your wants?"

"Oh, there is Gretchen who cooks all I want and attends to the room," said the Graf. "But she is deaf and dumb, and we speak by signs, though I sometimes think she cannot always have been so afflicted, or she could not do all that she does for me. But it is only three times a day, and were I to die, she could not hear, and she could not tell it. Oh, it is joy to have you here. Yet," he added, in a tone of deep pathos, "it is a fearful penance for one so young to be imprisoned in this dreary solitude."

(To be continued.)



[CROQUET AT THE FOLLY.]

## MAURICE DURANT.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Winter being full of care  
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished,  
more rare.  
Shakespeare's "Sonnets."

SUMMER is a delicious time when you, like the trees, the birds, the very atmosphere, are filled with happiness. Summer, when life is young, the blood healthy, and the heart free from care, is as near a heavenly season as anything earthly can be. But when the soul is filled with a never-to-be-gratified longing, aching with a dull, dead despair, heavy with remorse or unsatisfied love, the bright sun, the sweet-smelling, joyous flowers, the musically rustling trees, are an aggravation of your misery, and the general gladness around serves only to contrast with and deepen the darkness of your own misery.

So it was with Chudleigh Chichester. Young, handsome, possessed of a noble name and noble aims, he still perhaps was the most unhappy man in Grassmere. The time of grace granted to Sir Fielding was gradually drawing to a close, and Chudleigh, with all his perseverance and honest striving to ward off the calamity, could see nothing but ruin before them, for he imagined Maurice Durant too poor to lend the money. Then, beside this, his heart was torn with the pangs of unrequited, or rather unsatisfied love. His idol, his queen—Carlotta—had destroyed his hope in the gallery of the Hall that spring night, and left him to watch with untold, unimaginable agony the course of events which like a running stream bore Lord Crownbrilliant down to the prize which his heart thirsted and panted for.

Yes, try as he might to tear the image of the beautiful, worldly woman from his soul, strive as he might to shut it from his own eyes by flinging over it the epithets "worldly, heartless, mercenary," like black veils, it would not be torn forth nor hidden, and day by day, hour by hour, as he went about the estate, wandered o'er the moor, and hovered round the Rectory, which in its dreary desolation had something congenial, he could not but confess that he loved her still.

Maud, who unconsciously from experience knew what he was suffering, pitied him with her whole heart, hung about him when he was in the house and accompanied him in his walks as often as he would let her, and strove to reveal to him by word, look and touch the vast depths of her sisterly love.

Had it not been for the gentle, true-hearted girl perhaps the young man would have given way beneath his trouble. But her small white hand was always

stroking his, her tender, rosebud lips always pressing his forehead, and her sweet, gentle voice always whispering comfort in his darkest hours; and, supported by her and her alone, he played the man.

Being ignorant of the true state of the case, Maud pitied both Carlotta and her brother, and lavished her great love on both, thus adding a fresh pang to the agony the strange beauty was already enduring.

Lord Crownbrilliant was still at the inn, the negotiations for the Retreat, as it was called, having through some lawyer's reason been delayed.

His servants had increased in number and his equipages filled every available coach-house. Every day he visited the Folly, Hall, and Cottage, and accepted all the invitations to the two former.

Occasionally he ran up to town and back, or paid a visit of a few days to some of the county families; but ever returned to his post and—Carlotta.

Of course Lady Mildred did not long remain in ignorance as to which way the wind was blowing, and, with all a lady's love for matchmaking, she encouraged his lordship's suit and helped it on in every way she could. Whether Carlotta was grateful for this help she could not discover; indeed generally Carlotta was an unread book, a perfect mystery to her. But Lady Mildred was quite satisfied with loving her, and rather liked being mystified.

The Gregsons, like sensible people, refused to cry over spilt milk, and set about filling the Folly with eligible young men, with or without titles, and succeeded, owing to their acquaintance with the Hall and the Cottage, so that they could afford to look on and watch his lordship's fishing while they angled themselves.

One night, about three weeks after Lord Crownbrilliant had arrived at the inn, Maud was sitting by the oriel window in the picture gallery, watching the moon as it crept up behind the tall elms in the park, and thinking, with saddened eyes, of the strange events which had brought so much disquietude and unhappiness to the Hall, and as she pondered, in the form of a dreamy reverie, over her brother's disappointment and Carlotta's strange choice which caused it, her thoughts wandered to a theme always ready to creep into her mind, and she recalled the night of the storm, when the dark figure of Maurice Durant had appeared in the room, and, recalling it with every other scene in which he had afterwards figured, she was conscious of a wistful, almost painful longing to see the grand, sorrow-marked face, to hear the noble, kingly toned voice again.

"There is the organ on which he played," she murmured; "here is the spot where he stood; there he leant when overcome by the sudden faintness.

Yes, I can scarce persuade myself that it is not a trick of the fancy—that he has ever been here at all, and that his noble presence was anything more than the vision in a dream!"

She rose, with a sigh, and glided to the organ.

"Where is he now?" she murmured. "Thousands of miles away perhaps, lying in the scorching sun away in some wild forest, surrounded by innumerable dangers—wild beasts!—perhaps dead! Oh, no, no!" she added, quickly, covering her eyes and shuddering. "Not dead! I should know it if he were, I feel it. Not dead. May Heaven keep him wherever he is!" she breathed, a rosy flush flashing across her face, and leaving it paler than before. She had but uttered aloud the prayer she breathed for him in silence each night.

The organ-board was open, and she let her hands wander over it, pressing the dumb keys, recalling the wondrous melody she had heard Maurice Durant call forth.

"How wonderful a being he is!" she murmured.

"How he towers above all men I have ever seen, not only in beauty of form but in grandeur of bearing. My father said he was the greatest musician he had ever heard, and Chudleigh thinks that he holds everything in the grasp of his white, strong hands and massive brow. How sweet his smile—he smiled on me twice when I saw him last. Twice! Ah, I felt like a poor, drooping, withered flower drawn upwards to the sky by the bright beams of the sun. Twice! How great the comfort those smiles have brought. Yet, yet, some sorrow too, for were they not the smiles of a king for his weakest, meanest of subjects, the smiles of a master for his dog, the smiles of a father for his last and feeblest child? Ah, even yet it is sweet to think he smiled when he might as easily and as reasonably have frowned. They say his voice is stern and hard. It seemed soft and gentle as the falling of a rivulet to me. Stern—yes, to those who merit it; hard—" and she shuddered. "If he spoke harshly to me I should die! Once his hand touched mine—I remember it was in the hall—and I felt the blood leap and thrill to meet his fingers. I grew dizzy, faint with delight; my eyes turned to meet his, and—ah, what is the feeling that fills my soul when I think only of his name, that gives me such exquisite pleasure and pain at his touch? Is it wicked? Oh, no, no, I feel it is not; for I would die for him, give my life for nothing more than a smile or a friendly clasp of his hand."

And, overcome by her love—though she knew it not as love—she dropped her head on her heaving bosom and wept silently.

Suddenly the deep bay of a dog startled her, and,

rising hastily, she sprang to the window, for she had recognized Tigris's bark.

Hurriedly undoing a small piece of glass in the etained window, she leant out, and, peering through the moon-mist, saw lights glimmering through the trees in the direction of the Rectory.

Her heart leapt in her bosom.

"He has returned!" she breathed. "He has returned safe!—in the wood now. Ah, what is that?"

For, looking down, she had caught sight of something dark moving across the small patch of green between the park and the denser wood.

"It is he! It is he!" she murmured, quivering like an aspen leaf, her eyes lit up with a sublime love. "Here, within reach of my voice! Shall I call? No, no, I cannot. Shall I call the dog? No, no. Ah, dark, mysterious being, if you knew how my poor little heart beat at the sight only of your shadow! What is that?" she breathed, as at that moment, chiming in harmoniously with the musical wail of her voice, there broke upon the air a soft flood of the sublime melody she had heard ringing through the gallery from the old organ.

She recognized it in an instant, and her face flushed like a rose-leaf, while her hand pressed against her heart to still its tumultuous throbbings, and one thought filled her with a delicious delight.

"Is he playing to me—to me?"

But before the melody had died away on the bosom of the night air she had answered the question with a sad "No, no, he is but playing for himself."

Then, long after it had ceased, she remained at the casement motionless, her sweet, innocent face pressed against the leaden framework, listening thirstily and watching eagerly. But neither the music nor the shadow brought her joy again that night, and after an hour's watching and listening she stole to her chamber, almost convinced that the whole was but a dream.

On the morrow, however, Chudleigh greeted her entrance in the breakfast room with the announcement of Maurice Durant's return.

"When or how he came back no one knows," he said. "Last night the under-keeper saw a light flitting to and fro in the Rectory windows, and, thinking it meant thieves, stole along the hedge to reconnoitre. At the gate that big dog, Tigris, flew like a panther upon him, and so he says, nearly killed him. As it was, Maurice Durant only just came up in time, dashing through a hedge and calling the dog off with a single word."

"Is Barber much hurt?" asked Maud, in a low voice.

"Well, not for him, though I fancy it would have been enough to kill another man. Maurice Durant took him down to the stream, he says, washed his bites, and gave him a handful of gold, with a stern caution not to approach the Rectory grounds again. Barber was quite satisfied, and, in telling me of the affair, seemed indeed rather delighted. His arm is bound up in linen wrappings, but he says he doesn't feel any pain, and has no doubt that it will be all right in a day or two."

"Had not Doctor Wilson better see him?" said Maud, still keeping her face averted.

"I don't think there is any occasion," replied Chudleigh. "It seems that Maurice Durant left him by the bank while he fetched some ointment of some sort from the house. This he put on Barber's arm, giving him relief at once."

Maud said nothing, and Chudleigh as he opened the letters continued:

"He—Maurice Durant, I mean—is the most singular being I ever read or heard of. The power he seemed to possess over that dog was something extraordinary. After Maurice Durant had bathed the wound he said something and the dog at once commenced to fawn on the man and lick his arm."

"Barber has the old cottage at the corner of the wood, has he not?" asked Maud, in a low voice.

"Yes," said Chudleigh. "Why do you ask, Maudie?"

"I—I was going to see him and ask if he was hurt," she replied, flushing.

"You can do that without going to the cottage," said Chudleigh, rising with his coat in his hand. "He's at the back here somewhere. There he is," he said, as a tall, fine-looking young fellow, with his arm in a sling, walked across by the hedge.

He touched his hat respectfully as Chudleigh threw up the window and called to him, and walked up to the terrace.

"Come up the steps, Barber; I want you," said Chudleigh, and the next minute the man stood in the room.

"How is your arm now?" said Chudleigh, kindly.

"All right, sir, thank you," said the man, glancing round uneasily at the handsome room.

"Are you in any pain?" asked Maud, gently.

The man turned to her reverentially.

"Not much, miss, thank you. I never heard of a bite as give less trouble."

"How do you account for its being so easy?" asked Chudleigh.

"The ointment it was as put it right, sir," he replied. "I never seed such a queer-looking stuff afore; it were in a silver box and as green as grass. The gentleman—his honour the parson, I mean, miss—weren't sparin' with it—nor with his money nather."

Maud's eyes sought the table.

"Tell me how it all occurred," she said, as gently as before.

And the man, nothing loth, went through the story, winding up with:

"You see, miss, it weren't altogether my fault, I'd no notion that there were any one livin' in the Rectory, and seein' the light I made sart'n sure that it were thieves. There's been a suspicious-looking character a dawdlin' about the village for nigh upon a week, and I thought o' him directly I saw the light."

"A suspicious character, eh, what's that?" said Sir Fielding, entering the room at that moment, and stopping to kiss Maud on his way to his chair.

Whereupon the story had to be repeated again, this time by Chudleigh in a concise form.

"Maurice Durant back!" exclaimed Sir Fielding, in a tone that was half of pleasure, half of regret.

"Heaven bless me! You must have that arm seen to, Barber, immediately."

"Thank you, my lord," replied the man, who never could be brought to understand that Sir Fielding was not a peer.

"And what's this about suspicious characters too—eh?"

"I was just saying that there's a suspicious-looking man a dawdling about, my lord. He is most allers to be found sitting at the 'Chequers Tap.'"

"That doesn't make him suspicious—eh, Barber?" said Sir Fielding, with a slow chuckle. "If so there's scarcely one of you but would come under that head."

"No, it ain't that altogether," said Barber. "It's this look on 'im, my lord. He's from Lunnun—one of them thore lookin' persons, short hair, with a blue neckcloth, Lunnun heavy boots and a broken nose; he sir very suspicious, my lord, I assure you. You'd say so yourself if you saw him."

"Oh, I can take your word for it, Barber," said Sir Fielding, getting tired of the subject, and engrossed with his papers.

"You must keep a sharp look-out on the birds and hares and—Why, bless me here's Tyndal's article on 'Light and its Relevant Heat' at last! Eh? oh, Barber, go into the housekeeper's room and tell her she's to give you—eh?—oh, what you like."

"A bottle of wine from the butler, and some luncheon," said Chudleigh, kindly.

And, dismissed with a nod, the man, filled with gratitude, bowed respectfully at his beautiful young mistress, whom he adored, stepped from the window, and leaping over the terrace disappeared.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

She's beautiful, and therefore to be wooed;  
She is a woman, therefore to be won.

Some certain drops of conscience are yet within me.

Little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself.

Let no man abide this deed  
But we the doers.

THERE was once to be seen in the city which, perhaps, the French still call the Metropolis of the World a small picture by a clever young artist, representing Cupid, the god of love, daintily attired in a soup-basin hat, training a pair of turtle doves with a croquet mallet. It was a clever idea, and not far from being a truthful one, for there are more love matches made over and through croquet during the season than any other game extant.

Being fully aware of this fact, the Misses Gregon coaxed their papa into giving a croquet party, and issued invitations to half the county.

It was to be a "gathering of the o-c-clans," as Lord Crownbrilliant expressed it, and a great number of acceptations were expected.

Mr. Gregon once having given way to his daughters' "confounded nonsense," immediately set about making the best of the matter, and brought down a host of workmen from town to build gorgeous marquees of crimson and gold, erect artificial shrubberies and solid-looking fountains, and turn the Folly grounds into as close an imitation of the Versailles gardens as they could possibly be made.

For two weeks before the event the house, as Tom said, was "flung out of window."

Great chefs took possession of the kitchen, cunning artificers seized the drawing-rooms and knocked them into theatres—for there were to be some charades played by a London troupe of actors, specially engaged.

Decorators marched up and down the hall, and the family were driven in despair to the only places of refuge—the dining-room and bed-chambers.

"It's a dreadful piece of fuss," admitted Miss Lavinia.

"A confounded nuisance," growled Tom.

"A diabolical piece of stupidity!" roared his father. But although every one was out of temper with the nuisance, stupidity or fuss, each and all were persuaded that it was the proper thing to do, and that good results would follow, although if asked of what nature were the good results they expected they would severally have been rather puzzled to say.

Notwithstanding Tom's repeated assurance for weeks beforehand that the particular Monday fixed on for the fete would be a wet one, the day opened with a glorious burst of sunshine and without a single cloud.

The invitations had been very freely accepted, and a shining host of beddled people was expected.

There were to be Lord Cornwallis, the greatest and grandest man in Armatorpa, with my lady and their son, the Marquis of Graventon, a most frightful character, who in any other rank in life would have been sent abroad for his country's good, but was only head-shaken at by the chaparones and mothers of marriageable daughters, and called, not without a spark of admiration, "a naughty man," or at worst "a scoundrel."

Then there were the Marquis of Townston and the marchioness—people who never walked or rode save behind four of the best blood, and were known to be the wealthiest people in the county, and credited with being the wealthiest in the world.

"I wonder if the Townstons will come in their puce liveries," had mused Miss Bella, "or the crimson corsets!"

With them were expected their neighbours, the Honourable Holdens, who were as poor as church mice, but whose blood was reputed to be the flour of a blue-bag.

These physiological curiosities would have refused the invitation, scornful to pass the threshold or tread the lawn of a Manchester merchant, had not Sir Fielding Chichester, whose blood was as cerulean as their own, and Lord Crownbrilliant taken care to let them know they were going.

The Chichesters, Lady Mildred, Lord Crownbrilliant, and the heads of Annsleigh, of course, accepted, and a shoal of literary, artistic and eccentric noblemen, who had been captured with Lord Crownbrilliant's assistance, made up the list.

An invitation had been sent to the Rectory—that is to say it had been dropped into the slit of the old gate—but it might have been inserted through the palings of the Durant family vault for all notice that was taken of it.

At ten o'clock the distinguished company began to arrive, and for two hours the gravel drives were cut up by spanking cattle and magnificent equipages.

The Gregons found their hands quite full in the matter of reception, but they were backed up by Sir Fielding and Lord Crownbrilliant: and by constantly reiterating the assertion that the Folly was Liberty Hall, and taking the guests to the gorgeous marquees in which refreshments of the choicest and most elaborate kinds were displayed, got through very well.

A military band was stationed in the grounds, and around it, collected in groups, were the early arrivals, waiting for the striking of the hoops and the commencement of the croquet.

In one of these stood the Honourable Chandos Holden and the Marquis of Graventon, talking together in languid tones, and criticizing their surroundings in extremely cynical ones.

"Tremendous place," said the marquis. "Never saw grounds better laid out."

"No," assented the Honourable. "The old fellow knows how to do things. No end of money all this sort of thing costs. He can afford it, though, that's one thing."

"Pretty rich?" asked the marquis.

"Diabolically," replied the other. "The three cubes will have a fortune each. Nothing like Manchester. I know a man who says this Gregon has made two millions—Hush! Here's the boy and his sister. Mr. Gregon, I was just saying to the marquis that I never saw a more beautiful place. Holden Chase will be an eyesore to me after this. Such taste! Exquisite, by Jove!"

"Exquisite indeed!" echoed the marquis, bestowing one of his killing smiles upon Miss Bella, who coloured beneath it vividly.

"I am glad you like it," she said. "Have you been to the conservatories?"

"Not yet; I've only just come," replied the marquis. "I will go to them at once if you will tell me that they are only one half so pretty as this."

Miss Bella smiled, and the marquis, offering his arm, begged her to play escort, and away they went.

"Fond of horses?" said Tom, left alone with the Honourable, and in despair for conversation.

"Very," replied the aristocrat, eyeing the plebeian with critical glance.

"I can show you a fast one, I think," said Tom, "if you like to walk round to the stables."

And so the Honourable was disposed of. In another group stood Lord Cornthwaite and Clarence Gervaise, the landscape painter. His lordship was a lover of art, and therefore ran to artists with favour.

"Pretty little picture of yours, Gervaise," he was saying. "Sold?"

"Yes, Lord Brownstone bought it. Gave my man Davies a cool thousand."

"Heavy!" remarked his lordship.

"Very!" laughed the fortunate artist, "but Brownstone can afford it. By George! there's a splendid bit of colour. Who is she?"

And he cast a glance in the direction of Carlotta, who at that moment entered the grounds, dressed in a white satin with black lace falling on it, and glittering here and there with some antique ornament, of a character quite unknown to the fashionables assembled.

Her hair was brushed from her forehead as usual, but bound up at the back in thick, heavy coils that would not have shamed a Cleopatra.

"Don't know," said his lordship. "Who's that old lady with—Oh, by Jove, that's Lady Mildred. I can get the introduction. Hello! here's Crownbrilliant."

And he stopped to shake hands with that individual, who was walking in the direction of Lady Mildred and Carlotta.

"Ah, Cornthwaite," he drawled. "Glad to see you, by Jove. Pretty gown, eh? Soon Mr. Gervaise? Nice old boy. Mr. Gervaise, think we've met before. I admire that p-p-picture of yours immensely. Gwand! Simply gwand!"

"Do you know that beauty?" said Cornthwaite. "Gervaise and I want an introduction."

"Who? W-which?" stammered Lord Crownbrilliant, staring about, although he knew perfectly well whom Lord Cornthwaite meant.

"The one in satin and lace," was the reply.

"Oh, yes; that's Miss Lawley. Staying with Lady Mildred. Want an introduction? Come along!"

And the three went off. Lord Crownbrilliant, with a flush of colour in his face as he shook hands with her ladyship and Carlotta, introduced his friends and then reluctantly obeyed a look from an old dowager who had known his father, and himself since his infancy, and crossed over to her.

At three o'clock Sir Fielding, Maud and Chudleigh arrived, and Maud found herself speedily surrounded by a throng of respectful admirers, who claimed acquaintance with her on the score of friendship for her father.

Her pale, sweet, fresh loveliness was particularly bewitching for the blast men of society, and every step she took some exquisite or other turned to make an insubstantial note of genuine admiration.

When croquet began the groups broke up and the band recommenced playing.

Lord Crownbrilliant, Carlotta, and Miss Bella found themselves together in one set, while Maud and Tom Gervaise were parcelled into another.

Chudleigh was chained to a pretty little girl in the archery ground, and with his usual good nature was vainly endeavouring to teach her how to use the bow, while his fine eyes constantly wandered to the noble figure of Carlotta in the distance.

Lord Crownbrilliant hated croquet, as he did every other game which necessitated his standing in the hot sun for any length of time, and Carlotta was scarcely one to be particularly delighted with knocking wooden balls through hoops, so that it is little wonder their side came off the losers.

"By Jove!" murmured his lordship, shaking his head with a would-be regretful smile. "We've lost, eh? I'm vevy sorry. I said I couldn't play, you know."

"And you can't—not a bit," muttered a young gentleman, who, being devotedly attached to the game, and unfortunately on his lordship's side, was rather savage.

"Never mind, better next time," he added, with woeful cheerfulness, sucking his mallet. "Play again, Miss Lawley?" he asked, anxiously.

"No; I am rather hot," said Carlotta. "Let me go and get a substitute."

Lord Crownbrilliant looked delighted.

"Wait a minute," he said. "There's Bensonby and his sister waiting to come in. I'll go and ask them."

And he went over and brought the pair up.

"Where is Lady Mildred, I wonder?" said Carlotta, resting her hand upon his arm lightly.

"Lady Mildred? In the conservatory," replied Lord Crownbrilliant, promptly, who remembered seeing her ladyship at the end of the lawn behind.

"We will go and find her."

"Thank you," said Carlotta, unsuspectingly, and

they walked off in the direction of the huge glass buildings near the house.

"Lucky dog, Crownbrilliant," whispered little Lord Cripson to his neighbour Mrs. Vavasour—"got the beauty in his toils."

"I don't know," replied that lady, nibbling her ice, and looking wise—as she was. "Not a very great catch, my lord."

"No money?" asked Cripson, who was too old a friend of the lady's to be bashful.

"Not a penny," was the reply.

"Ah," said his lordship, with evidently cooling admiration.

"I don't see Lady Mildred," said Carlotta when they had reached the centre of the artificial world of nature, where stood a rustic fountain from which the water sprang up through a woman's clasped fingers upraised in prayer, until it moistened the clinging leaves above. "I do not think she is here."

"At the other end, pwape," said Lord Crownbrilliant. "Won't you sit down a little while and wait?" and he brushed some leaves from a rock seat for her.

Carlotta sank into it, but still looked up and down the tessellated pavements.

"Ah, there is Miss Gervaise," she said, getting a glimpse of that young lady's expansive crimson costume through a parting of the leaves. "Let us go to her."

"Not for a minute or two," pleaded his lordship. "It would be a pity to disturb Miss Gervaise; she is evidently quite engrossed. Wait a little while in the cool, and I will go and get you an ice."

"Not an ice, thanks," she said. "I'm not so hot, but I will rest a little while."

And she bent back with her large, clear eyes fixed upon the floor.

"I'd give a thousand pounds for your thoughts," said he, rather timidly, bending over her.

"They are not worth a thousand farthings," she replied, looking up at him calmly.

"Then will you tell me them?" he drawled.

"Oh, yes," she replied. "If you like, I was thinking how badly you played croquet."

"Were you, by Jove?" he exclaimed, gazing at her with wondering admiration. "D-do you like croquet?"

"Not much," she replied.

"Nor I," he said, looking pleased. "That's strange, isn't it? Do you know—ho! ho!—it's vevy ridiculous, but I was thinking the game of life was vevy like the game of croquet."

"How?" she said, scarcely hearing him, her eyes fixed upon the tall form of Chudleigh Obichewster as he stood talking to Mrs. Vavasour, and looking round—as she could plainly see—with eager yet painfully searching eyes. "Was he looking for her?" she thought.

"Ho! ho!—it's ridiculous. One has such strange ideas sometimes. Y-e-s. This is what I thought. Men and women are like the balls, the hoops are the incidents and a-a-accidents of life, the mallets are the f-f-fates, and the laws, the ground you know, is the course of true love."

She looked up with a weary smile, and, speaking more to herself than him, said:

"How so, my lord? 'True love,' says the proverb, 'never runs smooth.'"

"The proverb is wrong," exclaimed his lordship, eagerly, "at least, sometimes. Don't you believe in proverbs, they're so ridiculous. Why shouldn't true love run smooth when there are all the things to make it?"

She bowed her head.

"I cannot answer," she said. "I don't know, therefore I am beaten. Go on."

"Where?" exclaimed the peer, his pretty little smile having flown from his narrow brain long ago. "Oh, ah, yes—by Jove!—weally forgot. Where was I?—oh, well, the winning-post is matrimony, and that's all. There's nothing more left—ho! ho! counting up on his fingers, 'balls men and women, mallets f-f-fate, laws true matrimony—y-e-s, that's all.'"

"It is vevy pretty," said Carlotta. "Where did you read it?"

"Nowhere, 'pon honour," exclaimed his lordship, triumphantly. "Perfectly original, I assure you," then suddenly: "You're making fun of me, Miss Lawley."

"No, no, I am not," she said, almost eagerly, arousing herself with a start, and smiling coldly up at his face.

"Are you sure?" he asked, screwing his eyes up searchingly and shaking his golden hair slowly. "I'm so glad. I hate you to make fun of me, Car—Miss Lawley, I mean. You know I do, don't you? I'm afraid you always think I'm vevy ridiculous."

"No, I do not," she said, turning her face away with an apprehension of what was coming that made her feel cold and faint.

"Let us go and find Lady Mildred."

"Oh, no, not this minute!" he said, flushing, and dropping into the seat by her side. "Don't go this minute, Car—Miss Lawley. I want to speak to you—if I dare; you'll listen to me, won't you? I—Carlotta, I love you, I—you know I do, any fellow could see that I-long ago."

Struggling on with his softened "r's" and drawling voice quickened by the excitement, he paused at last for breath, and, clutching at her hand nervously, waited for her to speak.

How wondrous is the human heart! Struggling with her feeling of blank despair and horror, she remembered years after the thrill of triumph that she felt as she compared this idiot's babbling to the noble flood of words, the flashing eyes of that other one who had asked and taken his refusal like a man.

"Oh, speak, oh, speak, Carlotta!" exclaimed the exquisite, with puny accents. "Tell me you I-love-me," then he stopped, for her cold, dreamy face startled him. "Are y-you ill?" he asked, aghast.

"Give me time," she gasped, as if for air. "Give me till to-night," she pleaded, pushing his hand away with her own icy one.

"No, no," he exclaimed, catching at her arm and drawing her towards him. "Now—now!—let me know if you love me and will be Lady Crownbrilliant."

Was it possible that he knew the winning card that he should play it at this critical moment?

"Now," he repeated, putting his other arm round her waist. "Come, Carlotta, s-say yes!"

A shudder ran through her frame, but her voice was cold, calm, unquivering and even clear as, summoning all her strength, she looked down upon him and said:

"Yes."

(To be continued.)

## WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

### CHAPTER LX.

THE wedding-day had come and gone, but there was no marriage. The magnificent Parisian trousseau was hidden out of sight; the upholsterers and French cooks had been dismissed; and the silence and gloom of the grave had settled down upon the old Highland castle; for in her chamber Lady Marguerite lay at the point of death.

She had borne all her sorrow with fortitude, and determined to sacrifice herself rather than harass and disturb her father, with a heroism that amounted to sublimity; but the shock and joy of her sudden release had prostrated her on a bed of illness, from which those who loved her best feared she never would rise.

The earl did not return from London. They had telegraphed for him repeatedly without success, and now that his daughter grew worse, day by day, Captain Forsythe had gone down in person to find him and bring him to Ravenswood.

Lady Marguerite's disease was brain-fever, of a very malignant type, and the crisis was at hand.

"We shall know to-night," said Doctor Renfrew, who had shaken off the bitter burden of his own grief, and was doing his utmost to save Pearl. He shook his head sadly as he looked down upon her wan, waxen face. "I'm afraid the chances are against her. If she lives, it will be a miracle."

Lady Neville left the room in tears.

The dreadful dénouement in regard to the baronet, together with Marguerite's illness, and the earl's unaccountable delay, had completely unnerved that stately matron. She did nothing but weep and bemoan her rueful fate.

The countess remained by Pearl's bedside, wrapped in her velvet dressing-gown, her turban awry, her spectacles pushed back.

She looked down upon the white, wan face of the dying girl with a suspicious moisture in her eyes. Marguerite was tossing restlessly, and claspings and unclasping her thin little hands.

"Oh, papa," she moaned, plaintively, "I will do it for your sake; but I shall die—I know I shall die! It would be sin to be Sir Bayard's wife and my heart another's—and I love him—my darling! my darling!"

The dowager arose with a determined air, and, grasping her cane, left the room, leaving Judith alone with her young lady.

The countess went in search of Lady Neville; and found her on a sick couch, with a jewelled salts bottle at her nose.

"Lady Neville," she began, abruptly, "if that poor child should die, I shall feel always that we've murdered her."

Her ladyship uttered a little shriek.

"Oh, for mercy's sake," she cried, "do not say such dreadful things! I am so worried now, and have suffered so much—"

"Don't speak of what you've suffered," interrupted the countess; "think of that poor young thing that we've brought to the brink of the grave! What did she suffer when we were trying to force her into a marriage with a murderer? Think of that, Lady Neville!"

Her ladyship sobbed hysterically.

"I'm sure we didn't know—we thought—"

"Yes, we did know," cried the dowager; "we did know that the girl hated him, and that was enough. I see my error now. If the man had really been Bayard Broughton, the wrong would have been the same. I see it now, and I've come here to tell you what I'll do."

Lady Neville ceased her sobbing, and was gracefully attentive.

"There's but one thing that will save Marguerite's life. She loves Forsythe—she must marry him!" pursued the countess.

Lady Neville uttered a cry of dismay, and covered her face with her hands.

"Hush! hear me out!" the dowager continued. "Forsythe will be here to-night; let him go to Marguerite; let her know she is at liberty to love him, and it will save her life. We can't wait to find the earl, but you can win him over—he won't object when he knows her life was at stake. Consent to this; let Marguerite marry the captain, and I will make him my heir, just as I intended to do by Sir Bayard. What do you say?"

Lady Neville reflected.

In the space of a minute her shrewd brain, always keenly alert where its own interests were involved, took in all the future possibilities. A marriage with a captain, a man with no name or pedigree, was a deplorable thing; yet as the heir of the Countess of Mortlake it would be no difficult matter to secure for him a peerage.

"What do you say?" repeated the countess, impatiently.

"What can I say?" replied her ladyship, "if the child's life is at stake?"

"Why, say that you'll try to save it. Well, well, 'tis settled; it won't be difficult to make it right with the earl when he comes; and he might search England from end to end and not find a better husband for his daughter."

So it was understood that Lady Marguerite was to marry the man she loved; but, all unconscious of this great happiness in reserve for her, the poor girl lay suspended as it were between time and eternity.

The golden September afternoon waned, the crisp, cool twilight fell, and Captain Forsythe drove up the avenue under the yellow gloom of the oak boughs. The countess met him on the terrace.

"How is she?" were his first words.

"Alive!" responded the countess, with gloomy significance.

The captain's handsome face betrayed his deep emotion.

"There is hope?" he questioned, his voice thick and hoarse.

"There's always hope while life lasts," answered the countess; "but only one thing can save Marguerite's life."

"And that?" said the other, under his breath.

"She loves you—and if she lives she shall be your wife. You must save her, or lose her."

"I can't lose her—I'll save her—my love shall tear her from the very grave itself."

He was rushing past her, but the countess waved him back.

"Not now," she said; "the doctors are with her. Wait."

"I can do more than the doctors!"

"No doubt; but wait. Where's the earl?"

"Heaven knows. He has not been in London—they know nothing of him at his club—nor anywhere. The last sight that was had of him was at the railway station in Perth. I'm afraid he's come to harm."

"So am I," echoed the countess. "He would have been here before this if he had not come to harm. I'm afraid the poor man has lost his reason—he was in a fair way for it."

"Even in that case he would be heard from. I fear even worse than that. The earl has enemies. But I'll leave no stone unturned till he is found, or the mystery of his disappearance made clear."

It was midnight. The little French clock on the mantel in Marguerite's chamber just pointed to the midnight hour.

Doctor Renfrow stood beside his patient with a grave face. She lay like a marble image, her face as white and wan as moonlight, her sweet eyes sealed, her lips parted by a faint gasping effort to breathe, all her glorious, golden tresses streaming unbound around her, her slender hands clasping and unclasping themselves in a nerveless, wandering way.

The old physician shook his head, and glanced across at Lady Neville.

"'Tis almost over," he whispered.

Judith, standing by, wrung her hands in agony, and the countess sat silent, with an awed, remorseful face.

Captain Forsythe arose, and, approaching the head of the bed, bent over the lovely, dying face. Strong man and brave soldier that he was, he wept, in his great despair, like a woman.

"My darling," he murmured, clasping the little, wandering hands in his own, and holding them to his lips, while his tears rained down on the white face, "my precious love, can't you speak to me once more? Only one word—say that you know me, that you love me, my beautiful little Pearl."

The passionate, plaintive voice, the tender kisses, and raining tears aroused the failing senses of Marguerite, and called her back from the very gates of death. She lay entirely motionless for an instant, even her very breathing suspended; then with one painful gasp her sealed lids fluttered open, and the sweet blue eyes looked up full of recognition and deathless devotion.

"You know me, you do know me, Pearl?" cried the captain.

"I know you—and I love you."

The whispered words, faint as a dying zephyr, reached her lover's ear, and he clasped her to his breast in a transport of bliss.

"And you are mine—my own for ever and ever—there is nothing to separate us now, sweet one, and you shall live for my sake," he cried.

"For your dear sake," responded the feeble lips, and with a smile of ineffable content she settled down, her head against his breast, her thin, white fingers clasping his hand, and dropped off to sleep like a babe.

"She'll live," uttered Doctor Renfrow, drawing his hand across his eyes as he left the room.

#### CHAPTER LXI.

THE Countess of Mortlake sat in her chamber, on the following morning, wrapped in her royal velvet, when her waiting woman entered to say that Captain Forsythe begged the favour of a short interview.

"Bring him in then," said the dowager, who, now that the pressure was removed from her heart and conscience, was fast falling back into her old, imperious habits; "send him in."

The woman obeyed, retiring discreetly as the captain entered. He advanced to the dowager's side with a courtly bow.

"You perceive," he began, with that irresistible smile of his, "you perceive, my dear countess, that I am already presuming upon your great kindness. I have a story to tell, and I want to know if you'll have the patience to hear it."

"I'm not fond of stories, Captain Forsythe," she replied, crustily, but at the same time indicating a seat in front of her arm-chair, which the captain very gracefully accepted, "and I can't see what in the world you can have a story about!"

"I have one, nevertheless, begging your ladyship's pardon," continued the captain, "but I'm not given to many words at any time, and I promise to be very brief. To begin, Colonel Richard Brooke, the worthy soldier who played the rôle of Sir Bayard for the last few months, has been arrested, and committed to prison by an indictment for murder—the murder of Sir Bayard Broughton."

"So I was informed by Lady Neville not ten minutes ago—and, let us add, the news gave me great satisfaction; but what has that to do with your story?"

"More than your ladyship expects, perhaps," replied the captain, his brown eyes twinkling. "I happen to know that Sir Bayard Broughton is alive!"

The countess started to her feet.

"What do you say?" she cried; "Sir Bayard Broughton alive? What are you talking about, Captain Forsythe?"

"About what I know to be so, my lady—but first hear my story."

"When your letter—you remember it, no doubt—in which you notified Sir Bayard Broughton of your determination to make him your heir, provided he should consent to marry the Earl of Strathpey's daughter—when that letter, and the invitation to your ball, reached the baronet's rooms the baronet was absent, having made a trip down to Sussex. But his bosom friend, Colonel Richard Brooke, who shared the baronet's rooms, and purse, and whatever else he might possess, in a very Damon-and-Pythias-like manner—this gallant colonel chanced to be present when the letter came, the letter bearing your ladyship's seal and coat-of-arms."

"Now, it has since been revealed that Colonel Richard Brooke was half-brother to Sir Bayard, and had long meditated to get possession of the title and inheritance which he fancied belonged to him;

but Sir Bayard had no suspicion of this; he never dreamed that the colonel was aught else than the good friend he pretended to be.

"To return to the point, however, the letter bearing your ladyship's coronet appears to have suggested some opening for action to the adventurous colonel. He broke the seal, read it, saw that Sir Bayard Broughton was fated to be a rich and happy man, and decided that the hour had come when he must step into Sir Bayard's shoes."

"Go on," urged the countess, deeply interested.

"Accordingly," pursued the captain, his handsome eyes still twinkling, "the colonel's valet was at once sent down to Sussex to intercept Sir Bayard's return. He did so in a most effectual manner. He waylaid the baronet when he was driving toward London, struck down his horse, and dragged him from his carriage. A brief struggle ensued, and the colonel's valet drew a dagger, and plunged it, hilt-deep, into Sir Bayard's heart."

The countess shuddered, and covered her face with her hands.

"Leonard was sure that his job was well done," pursued the captain, "and he proceeded to place the body of the murdered man in his own carriage, and, mounting up beside him, he drove to a pile of old ruins, some two or three miles distant. Here he dragged him out, and carried him into the old building, and hurled him, headforemost, into a vault a dozen feet below. 'The fall should, according to all reason, have broken the baronet's neck; but, I dare say, he was not born to be murdered. Instead, the shock of the fall roused him, and sent the blood from his wounds, that was flowing inward, gushing out in great jets. This saved his life, but it left him very weak."

"For an eternity, it seemed, he lay there, on the reeking flagstones, in utter darkness, and suffering indescribable tortures. If Sir Bayard ever was a bad man—"

"He never was," interrupted the countess; "a better man never lived."

The captain smiled, and went on:

"I was going to say, if he had any sins upon his soul, he repented of them in those endless hours of darkness and torture, when, bereft of all hope, he faced death in all its horror. But, contrary to all expectation, help and deliverance came. At last, the sound of footsteps and the murmur of human voices broke the grave-like silence, and the light of a lantern streamed in upon the darkness."

"The baronet lifted up all the voice he could command, and cried for help. It came, in the form of a band of counterfeiters, who carried on their unlawful proceedings in an adjoining vault. They surrounded him—gruff, dark-faced men, stained with crime, yet not without some human good. They dressed his wounds, gave him nourishment—in short, got him on his feet again, and asked no remuneration but his promise not to betray them. You may be sure he gave them that."

"And Sir Bayard?" gasped the countess.

"Returned to London, and found that his place was filled, his name, his title, even his old garments, had all been appropriated by the man who was his bosom friend."

"Where is he now?" cried the countess.

"He determined to remain incognito for a time, and see how matters went; and, my dear countess," he continued, his brown eyes fairly dancing, "is it possible that you do not suspect? Is there no look of my ancestors in my face to tell you who I am?"

The countess arose, with a stifled cry, staring wildly over her glasses.

The captain put up his hand at the same moment, and removed his wig of black, curling hair, and stood before her in all his stalwart Saxon beauty, a Broughton from the crown of his blonde head to the sole of his aristocratic foot.

The old lady stared for a full minute in utter amazement, then she sat down and folded her hands meekly.

"Well, well," she uttered, "what a stupid old woman I must be!"

The captain broke into a laugh, and the sound fired her temper.

"How dared you deceive me so?" she cried; "why didn't you make yourself known to me, and spare all this trouble?"

"I beg your pardon, my honoured kinswoman," explained the young man. "I should have done so, but not long after my recovery I went to the ball at Dalewood, curious to meet the man who had the daring audacity to personate myself. I got up this little disguise for the occasion, fully intending to make myself known in a few days. But that evening I met Lady Marguerite! Well, it was a case of love at first sight. I might have resigned my name and inheritance, but never her. On the instant I conceived the madcap design of trying my power to win her under my assumed name and character. You

know how far I have succeeded! She thought me worthy of her love, and your ladyship honoured me with—"

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" ejaculated the countess; "don't presume on my preference—I'll never forgive you—I won't!"

But she ended by throwing her arms about the great fellow's neck, and sobbing like a girl.

The baronet declared himself the happiest and proudest man in England.

"But not a word of this," cried the dowager, gleefully, when she had dried her eyes; "clap on your black wig again—poor Marguerite's too weak to bear surprises now, and I want to keep my Lady Neville in the gall of bitterness a while longer. A captain's too vulgar for her fine ladyship! Won't she stare when she hears the story?"

The captain readjusted his black locks.

"But there is one matter that must be attended to," he said, gravely; "the man who calls himself Colonel Brooke has been arrested."

"Let him be tried for his crimes," replied the countess.

"No," responded the baronet, "he is my half-brother, according to his own statement, and I can afford to forgive him now. Let him go free—and," he added, a little hesitatingly, "I haven't much in my own right to give, but I shall do what I can. Poor fellow, it does seem unjust that I should have all, and he nothing. I must give him enough to get out of England with, at any rate."

The countess gave vent to her dry, peculiar laugh.

"I'm sure of your identity now," she remarked; "no one but a Broughton would ever dream of rewarding the man who tried to murder him. But have it your own way. Hand me that writing-case, will you?"

The baronet obeyed, and she proceeded to write a cheque for a considerable amount.

"That will content you," she said, and Sir Bayard, bowing profoundly, withdrew.

(To be continued.)

## FIGHTING WITH FATE.

### CHAPTER LI.

UPON that eventful Saturday night, while Darrel Moer and Grimrod, the movements of the latter unknown to the former, were speeding towards the Cypresses, with the full purpose of murder in their hearts, a great and unaccountable dread settled down like a dense black pall upon the soul of young Honor Glint. She grew uneasy even before the night fell. A vague depression, such as often warns sensitive people of an impending peril, seized upon her, deepening into a terrible foreboding, and that pall-like dread and gloom which no reasoning could dispel.

Presently Miss Bing appeared at her door with the announcement:

"I have just received a telegram from Mr. Moer. He's on his way here. He'll be here to-night."

"What for?"

"That is what I cannot guess. I wrote to him that the doctor's assistant had carried away the dead body of Mrs. Moer, so he's not coming to see her. His visit concerns you. He says I am not to release you upon any account, nor for any consideration whatever. Can it be that he is taking this journey merely to exact a promise from you which I could exact just as well as he?" demanded Miss Bing. "Perhaps," she added, with a sudden idea, "he has slipped up in his marriage with Miss Floyd, and he's coming back to you."

Honor shuddered. She knew that Darrel Moer had loved her as much as he was capable of loving any one, and the idea seemed to her not unlikely.

"But I am not his wife," she said. "I will not marry him. If he should come to-night, I will not see him."

"He is master in this house," said Miss Bing, coolly. "I advise you to be ready to receive his visit. I must go now to prepare his supper. I have told you of Mr. Moer's coming, so that you will not retire."

She retreated abruptly, securing the door behind her.

Honor's first act, after the woman's withdrawal, was to push her bedstead against the door leading into the hall, and to wheel her chest of drawers against the door giving into Miss Bing's room. Thus barricaded, she felt more secure.

"I believe I comprehend the reason of his coming," the young girl thought. "Miss Floyd has refused to marry him, and his old fancy for me has revived. I understand now why I feel so strange to-night. Darrel Moer thinks that he can force me to become his wife. But I will not be here to meet him," she said to herself, her dusky eyes flashing. "My only safety is in flight. He is utterly without honour or principle. I dare not meet him. I will

riak everything—death even—rather than remain here in a trap helpless, like some snared bird. But can I escape?"

The key-holes of both the doors were covered by her barricades. She stole to the hearth, pushed aside the fender, and with her slender fingers pried up two of the bricks forming the hearth.

In a little cavity beneath these bricks was hidden a breakfast-knife.

Honor took it out. It had been worn and ground to a point, and had been as keen as a dagger. The blade, however, was broken now, and the keen edge was indented and broken, showing that it had been subjected to severe use.

Honor seized this implement and mounted her table before the window.

The nails and spikes which fastened down the window had been loosened by the toil of days and nights, and Honor drew them out readily. She had taken them out before many times, for she had not tamely submitted to her captivity, and had not ceased to plan an escape from the hour in which she had come to the Cypresses.

She pushed up the lower sash, and examined the fastenings upon the shutters—a hasp, staple and padlock. She had cut the wood nearly away around the heel of the hasp, and fifteen minutes' work would suffice to enable her to open the heavy wooden shutters.

She set to work resolutely, with all her strength concentrated in her slender wrists and hands. She toiled as a man toils for his life. But fifteen minutes had never seemed so long to her before, nor had she ever crowded so much of work and anxiety into a similar space of time.

She paused often to listen. The dulled knife slipped, and frequently refused to penetrate the wood.

But the girl's heart did not falter, and at last she achieved her triumph. The hasp and padlock hung loosely on one of the shutters, and both would open at her touch.

She swung them wide, and leaned out of the window, and looked at earth and sky. How glorious were the stars, the fresh breezes, the waving of the trees!

She did not heed the noxious air that came up from the reeking fens, but exulted in the strange delight of her partial freedom.

She had a small pair of toy scissors, which she had used in sewing, and with these she divided the ends of her sheets, softly tearing the wide linen into heavy strips.

Then with difficulty she cut up the thick woollen blankets, tying all her strips into one continuous rope.

"I can't make it reach from the bedstead to the ground," she thought. "I shall have to drag the bedstead to the window. How the time is passing. Darrel Moer must soon be here. And Miss Bing is likely to come up at any moment to see if I have gone to bed. I begin to fear that I shall not escape."

She pushed the bedstead under the window, exerting all her strength, and panting heavily, stopping frequently to rest and listen. No sounds yet of Miss Bing.

She trembled with anxiety lest her jailer should hear the rumbling of the bedstead, and she looked in vain for some farther barrier to place against the door.

"She creeps upstairs like a cat when she comes," murmured Honor. "She may be at the door now. She is likely to pounce upon me at any moment."

The fear spurred her to even greater quickness. She secured one end of the rope she had made to the bedstead, and dropped the other out of the window. It fell within three feet of the ground.

"That will do," she said, aloud, with a breath of relief. "And now I must attempt my flight."

She put on her hat and fur tippet, and climbed over the bed upon the high window-sill.

Without a moment's hesitation she grasped the frail rope, and swung herself clear of the house. She slipped slowly downward, the rope swaying dangerously, and her hands catching upon the thick knots, and tearing the tender skin, but she reached the end safely and dropped noiselessly upon the ground.

Honor looked about her with wild eyes, and then, as a consciousness that she was indeed free burst fully upon her she upraised her eyes with a prayer of gratitude to Heaven, and then sped like an arrow from the bow across the cypress-shaded lawn to the paved road, and along this to the highway.

As she opened the big five-barred gate, and stood upon the high road, she paused for a moment, uncertain which way to go.

"I must get to Somersham station," she thought. "Which way shall I take? I've not much time to deliberate. I'll turn to the right."

She did so, setting out at a rapid walk, and keeping a look-out before and behind her.

She had gone some three miles when she heard the rattling of a vehicle, rapidly driven, approaching her from the direction in which she was going.

"It may be—it must be Darrel Moer!" she thought.

She sprang over a roadside ditch and hid herself in a thicket of alders.

Some two minutes thereafter a dog-cart drawn by a powerful, fleet horse came rattling around a curve in the road and passed her. The vehicle had but a single occupant.

That occupant was Darrel Moer.

She recognized the dark, moustached face with a thrill of terror, and dared not stir from her concealment until he was well out of sight. She trembled, and was strengthless. Her very breath was hushed.

"He has come from Somersham station," she said, as soon as she could command her thoughts. "I am upon the right road."

She was about to arise and resume her wearisome flight when a second clatter of hoofs upon the paved road beyond the curve made her shrink back in her concealment.

A horseman came riding past at a good pace from the direction in which Moer had come, and followed the direction in which Moer was going. No thought of appeal to this rider entered Honor's mind. He looked so dark and fierce and terrible that she felt an instinctive horror of him, and hid herself yet deeper from his sight.

The horseman was Grimrod.

When he had passed on out of her sight the girl crept out from the friendly thicket, and fled along the lonely road, in the chilly night, through the gloomy fens, as if the pursuers had been at her heels. She knew that it was only a question of minutes, and that Darrel Moer would soon be on her track.

### CHAPTER LII.

DARREL MOER was not many minutes in traversing the distance that separated him from the Cypresses after passing Honor, and he drew up at the five-barred gate, leaped out, opened it, remounted his dog-cart, and drove up to the house, passing around toward the stable-yard.

On turning the angle of the dwelling he beheld Honor's manufactured rope swinging from her window.

He looked up at the open blinds with a great yell and dashed around to the rear door, sounding such a peal upon the knocker as waked every echo in the house.

Miss Bing came running to the door in affright. She undid the fastenings, and Moer burst in the door, while the chain was yet in her hands.

He looked like a maniac.

"The girl!—the girl!" he gasped, glaring at her with lurid, bloodshot eyes. "Where is she?"

"She's upstairs, sir. Lor', you do give me such a turn. She's up in her room, sir—"

"The same room that she had when I was here?"

"The very same, sir—"

"Come out here. I have something to show you."

Moer seized the woman's arm and half dragged her around the house, pausing under Honor's window.

At sight of the swinging rope Miss Bing uttered a shriek that pealed far out upon the fens.

"She's escaped!" she cried. "She was in her room two hours ago. I told her you were coming. She's not been long gone."

She tore herself loose from Moer's grasp and started away, entering the house and ascending to Honor's room.

She looked out at Moer from Honor's open window with groans of despair.

"It's not my fault," she bewailed. "I've guarded her like the crown jewels—that I have. Here's the knife I missed. Oh, Mr. Moer, she's somewhere on the road. Did you see nothing of her?"

"Nothing!" cried Moer. "Yet she must have taken the road to Somersham station. She expected me to-night? She must have heard me approach, and have hidden herself in some way-side thicket. I'll overtake her yet."

He hurried back to his dog-cart, leaped in, seized the reins, and drove away furiously. Miss Bing called to him frantically, telling him that Miss Gint did not know the way to Somersham, and that she was likely to have gone in the wrong direction, but her words fell on empty air. Moer neither heard nor heeded them. He drove out of the grounds, and lashed his horse along the public road, his glaring eyes roving from one side of the road to the other, his brain in a tumult.

At the distance of half a mile from the Cypresses he met Grimrod. The latter could not turn back at his approach, although he recognized the dog-cart after all, and met Moer with a cool audacity, raising his hat to him.

Moer's rage for an instant gave place to amazement.

"Grimrod! You here!" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said the manager, jauntily. "I came in the same train with you. Why don't you go on to the Cypresses? Have you backed out of your undertaking? Are you going to let this puny girl

out you from one of the finest estates in England?"

"No, no, no! She's escaped—not an hour ago; she's on the road somewhere. She's on her way to Somersham. We've passed her."

Grimrod uttered an oath at which a demon might have shuddered, and wheeled his horse and sped away in the direction he had come like a whirlwind.

Darrel Moor drove after him at full speed.

The two scanned the bushes with keen glances as they sped; but they knew that their quarry must be farther on, and did not linger on the road.

"We shall find her some three, four, or five miles ahead," thought Grimrod, spurring on his steed. "A delicate girl like that would be all night walking to Somersham."

Since leaving the farm of the Cypresses, during her five miles of flight, Honor had not seen a house nor a shelter of any description.

The country through which she was passing was to her like an unknown world. The unwholesome fens, the malarious air, the widespread look of desolation, the yawning roadside ditches, seemed to her strange and unreal.

"I'm so tired!" she cried, at last, piteously. "So tired! I must stop. I must rest. Oh, what is that?"

She halted and listened, with great wild eyes.

It was the clatter of a horse's hoofs.

"It is that horseman who followed Darrel Moor," she thought, in a panic. "They are coming back, and the horseman is in advance. They mean me some awful harm. I feel it. They will find me in the thickets or the fens. Where shall I hide? Oh, Heaven, save me!"

The girl's strength was waning. She could hold out but a minute longer.

In that last minute she was conscious of a cottage close at hand—a low stone cottage, with an overhanging roof. She staggered towards it, opened the little gate, crept wearily up the narrow walk, and dropped, in an utter exhaustion, into a dusky clump of bushes, unable to reach the door.

"I—I cannot stop here," she murmured. "They will find me here. I must go on farther."

She crept away on her hands and knees over a patch of green grass into a denser thicket of ornamental bushes, whose early and dense foliage reached even to the ground, and perfectly screened her.

She had hardly settled herself into this obscurity when the horseman came riding up.

He halted abruptly at the gate, which had fortunately swung shut, and uttered a yell that was intended to arouse the inmates of the cottage. It had that effect.

An upper window opened, and a woman's head looked out in surprise at him.

Sounds such as that to which he had given utterance were not common on that lonely road and at that hour.

Grimrod raised his hat to the woman.

"Excuse me, madam," he said, politely, "but I am in search of my daughter, who is not in her right mind, and has fled from her home. She would be somewhere about here by this time. Have you taken her in?"

"I have not, sir," replied the woman, courteously.

"I may have passed her or she may be on ahead," said Grimrod. "There have been no turns, so she cannot have quitted this road. My son-in-law is coming on behind, madam, and he may ask you the same question that I have done. My daughter is only a young girl, seventeen, madam, and of most striking appearance, having black eyes and golden hair. She calls herself Honor Glint, and has a great terror of her husband, who adores her. If she should have hidden herself in the fens until we passed—insane people are very cunning—and if she should come to you, madam, be kind enough to detain her."

With another bow he spurred away.

The woman retreated from the window, leaving it open.

Honor laid her cheek upon the damp ground, the words of Grimrod ringing in her ears.

"His daughter!" she thought. "What can that mean? Can I be the person he meant? Has Darrel Moor found some man like himself to personate my father and force me into some course repugnant to me?"

The suspicion seemed to her to be confirmed when Darrel Moor drove up in his dog-cart, alighted, and knocked at the door.

The woman, now fully dressed, looked down from her upper window, exclaiming:

"Are you the gentleman in search of his insane wife?"

"Yes—yes. Is she here?"

"No, sir. Your father-in-law stopped to inquire a few minutes ago, and said you would probably also stop. I have not seen the lady."

"Can we have passed her? Can she have taken to the fens? Ah, no, she must be on ahead," said

Moer, half distractedly. "Thanks, madam. If you see her, please detain her."

He sprang again into his vehicle and drove on towards Somersham.

The woman leaned upon her window sill and looked after him.

Honor tried to rise, but her strength was gone. Her whole being seemed one throbbing pulse. She knew that she could not continue her journey on foot, and a feeling of utter desperation came over her. She could not throw herself upon the pity of the woman at the window above her—that was certain. She stirred feebly, resolved to travel on, but the exertion made her quiver with pain, and a low moan burst involuntarily from her lips—such was her exhaustion, such her nearness to fainting down.

The woman at the window started and looked down into her horse's yard.

"What was that?" she asked, as if speaking to herself. "Ah!"

The girl comprehended, or at least thought her presence was discovered. With one supreme effort she crept out of the shrubbery and looked upward with a pite, prayerful face, from out of which her dusky eyes glowed like suns.

"Oh, pity me!" she pleaded. "Help me! I am not insane. I am not married. Save me! In Heaven's name, save me!"

The woman uttered an ejaculation, hesitated, looked in the direction in which the dog-cart had vanished, and then withdrew from the window.

Honor heard her descend the stairs and open the house door. She came out upon the patch of lawn, bent over the girl, picked her up in her strong arms and carried her into the cottage.

"Poor little creature!" the woman muttered. "She don't look insane. I'll take care of her till her relations come for her. How could she be! She must be got warm, or she'll have a fit of illness after this exposure. She isn't able to do a hand's turn for herself. I'll have to wait on her."

She gathered her up again in her arms, and carried her upstairs to her own room and her own bed. The girl was limp and almost lifeless.

The woman gently removed the little boots from the weary feet, and loosened the golden hair upon the small head.

"How like! how very like," she said, with a heavy sigh.

She began to remove the clothing from the tired form.

When the sleeve of the dress came off in her gentle hands, and the light fell upon the two memorable marks on Honor's arm—those marks the sight of which had so startled the Hungarian countess—the woman gave a great cry and fell upon her knees by the bedside, and clasped the girl's hands, and called wildly upon her.

The girl opened her eyes wearily.

"Who are you?" cried the woman. "Tell me your name."

"I am not his wife!" the girl moaned. "Indeed I am not. His wife is dead. I am only Honor Glint."

"Is that your real name?" asked the woman, with a fierce intonation; her very being seemed stirred to its deepest depths. "It is not. Say it is not."

The girl looked at her interlocutor in a sort of weary surprise.

"No, it is not," she said. "Oh, I am so tired."

"One word, what is your real name?"

"I—I don't know."

The woman, with another strange cry—this time full of joy, thanksgiving, and exultation—swept down upon the girl and showered kisses and tears upon her, speaking a host of incoherent words, all of which Honor was too numb and tired to understand.

At last the woman calmed herself, and with the gentleness of a mother undressed the girl and tucked her up in bed.

Honor presently fell asleep, and slept until morning. The woman watched by her all night, bending over her now and then with tears and kisses and thanksgivings.

When Honor awakened in the morning, rested and refreshed, her hostess was still beside her, and looking at her with tender, loving eyes.

The girl looked around her with a start, and with a gathering terror, as a remembrance of the previous night came over her.

"Hush, dear," said the woman, gently. "You are safe here. Those men shall not take you from me unless you choose to go. Lie quiet, while I prepare your breakfast."

The girl smiled restfully up into the honest face of her hostess and lay back on her pillow.

The woman went out, and was gone some time, returning at last with a dainty breakfast, which she fed to her guest with a motherly tenderness, hovering over her as a hen broods over her chickens.

"My name is Mrs. Williams," she said. "My husband is a sailor in the 'Argus,' and I'm expecting him home soon—"

"Oh, then I am sure you will be my friend," cried Honor. "The 'Argus' is papa's ship. Papa is Captain Glint."

"But surely, miss, you are not his own daughter? You said last night you did not know your true name."

Honor replied by telling her story unreservedly. The woman seemed to know something about her, and Honor trusted her instinctively. Besides, her only hope was in this woman. She was in constant terror lest her enemies should find her and demand that she should be given up to them.

"And you were married to Darrel Moor!" exclaimed Mrs. Williams. "What a strange fatality! But you are not his wife, and never have been, save for those words at the altar. You will thank Heaven for that. I shall take you to London to-morrow. In the meantime you are perfectly safe here. Even if he should trace you here, Darrel Moor could not take you from me."

Good Mrs. Williams did not know Darrel Moor. The long Sunday passed peacefully and without alarm. Nothing was seen of Honor's enemies. In the evening Honor, fully dressed, lay upon the couch in the cozy parlour, and Mrs. Williams went out to prepare her supper.

Honor was a little weary still. Her eyes drooped, and she did not see a face peering in at the window through a crack in the shutters—the face of Darrel Moor. She did not dream that danger was so near.

But Darrel Moor and Grimrod were both in the house yard, and both had seen her. They went around to the kitchen door and lifted the latch. It yielded, and they entered the house. Mrs. Williams confronted them with a man's bravery and resolution, but they pushed past her and entered the parlour.

Honor sprang up, her eyes aflame, and stood at bay.

Grimrod seized upon her and crushed her in his arms, retreating towards the door.

Darrel Moor covered his retreat with a pistol.

"This girl is my wife, and insane, whatever she may have told you. Dare to molest us and you will rue it," he cried, menacingly.

Grimrod hurried out with his struggling captive to the dog-cart, and put her in it. He bound her hands and feet, and threatened her if she did not keep silence.

"Don't irritate me!" he hissed in her ears. "Be careful. I can send whom my blood is up!"

Honor was forced to keep silence, reading murder in his eyes.

Darrel Moor, with his loaded weapon, backed out at the house door, came down the walk, sprang into the dog-cart, seized the reins, and drove in the direction of the Cypresses.

Mrs. Williams stood at her gate in the gloom, screaming and meaning in her anguish.

"You ought to have settled that creature," said Grimrod. "She'll identify us—"

"How can she? Our faces are muffled," said Moor. "She won't know us, not having seen us. We don't want more blood on us than is necessary. We must hurry on with this thing we've undertaken and get back to London. I wouldn't undergo again these twenty-four hours of suspense and fright for a million pounds! The girl must be disposed of before midnight!"

Grimrod nodded assent, and Moor drove on rapidly.

The conviction came to Honor that they were conveying her to her doom—that they meant to kill her.

(To be continued.)

## LORD DANE'S ERROR.

### CHAPTER LIII.

Sybil and Perdita started for France the next day. They went to the pretty chateau in Normandy where Sybil had been so happy with her husband. The unhappy and remorseful wife had a conviction that if Volney lived he would haunt the scene of their last Elysium. Besides, the blackened and charred ruins of the asylum already mentioned were within a half-day's drive of the chateau.

The young countess with her sister and her child took up their abode in the chateau, which had remained untenanted save by the servants left in charge. From there they made long journeys into the surrounding country, and, obtaining the requisite authority, searched, or caused to be examined, every insane asylum they could hear of.

They tracked Monsieur Lampière, the French doctor, from place to place, but when they finally brought him to bay he could or would tell them nothing but that his interesting patient, the English mildred, had perished in the flames that unhappy day when his asylum was burned.

Neither the wife nor the sister believed him. They remained abroad mostly for two years, but no trace was discovered of the missing earl.

They returned to England.

The child, the son of Volney and Sybil, grew in beauty and strength. Notwithstanding that despairing assertion of Sybil's that she should never love her boy till his father had seen him, he was the idol of her life. She scarcely lived out of his presence.

Perdita and Talbot Dane saw each other sometimes at a distance. They had never met.

The young barrister was slowly making his way. If Perdita had any regrets in his connection no one ever knew it.

Mrs. Lorne, the kind, warm-hearted widow whom Perdita had so long called mother, was dead.

After remaining in England nearly a year Sybil and Perdita went abroad again, taking up their abode this time in Paris. They lived very quietly and retired, forming few acquaintances, but going out much in an unobtrusive manner, frequenting such places as the two women fondly imagined Volney might visit if he were alive and in his right mind.

From the first moment Sybil had refused to believe that her lost husband was either dead or insane. She refused still, though in the three years since her little boy's birth she had not obtained the slightest trace of his existence.

They went to the Luxembourg Gardens one morning, Perdita and she.

For once the little boy, having a friend come to visit him, was left at home, and his young mother and aunt went to their airing alone.

The Luxembourg Gardens were not very gay, they were not so fashionable as they had once been, and were falling to neglect; but for that very reason Sybil fancied her husband might like to come here, where he would see fewer people and be less seen himself.

She sat down by Perdita, after two or three turns through the walks, and looked about her, watching every one who passed or appeared in the distance with that yearning, questioning expression which rarely left her eyes when outside her own house.

"So many people," she said, sadly, to Perdita, "and not one of them Volney. I wonder how many times my heart has leaped at some look in another, something in the walk, the attitude, the turn of the head, the sound of a voice that was the least like him. There is a gentleman now that if it were not for his shabby air I should say was the very image of Volney. There; he has gone out of sight, you can't see him now. Sit here, dear, while I go to the end of the walk and look after him. Not that I think it is he, of course, but I like to fancy the resemblance, and the least look like him makes me love to watch any one."

Sybil rose, and moved quickly away in the proposed direction.

Perdita watched the tall, slender, supple figure with a half-tender, half-sad light in her brown eyes.

"Will she ever see him again, I wonder?" she said, almost aloud; "strange how she clings to the belief that he is alive. But without that hope I don't know what she would do."

She had watched Sybil till she disappeared at a turning in the walk.

Her eyes were still fastened absently upon the spot, when the young countess suddenly reappeared, coming toward her almost at a run, her eyes flashing, her beautiful face lighted with a strange and terrible excitement.

Both hands were clasped tightly upon a card, which she held as if she feared it would escape them.

She leaped upon Perdita as she came up, gasping for breath.

"Oh, my dear, my dear, it was he," she cried, hysterically; "and I've got his address, and I'm going straight to him."

Perdita looked at her in amazement.

Sybil's lips were shaking, her cheeks white with agitation.

As Perdita put an arm round her, and drew her down upon a seat, she caught her hand and pressed it against her side convulsively.

"My heart is beating so I can hardly breathe," she said. "Oh, Perdita, Perdita, it seems to me I shall die of joy."

Perdita gently took the card Sybil was holding with trembling fingers.

"M. Volné, No. 10, Rue Genevieve," was pencilled on it.

Perdita was not so excitable as her sister-in-law, but her cheek flushed as she read the card.

"Where did you get this, Sybil?" she asked.

"I saw M. Noisette, and asked him if he knew the gentleman who had just passed. I thought he raised his hat to him. He told me he was called M. Volné, and gave me his address."

"Did you see the face of this gentleman really—of M. Volné, I mean?" inquired Perdita, rather doubtfully.

"Not quite, I should not really have thought it was he but for the name."

Perdita kissed the white, agitated face.

"I would not build too much on this, pet," she said, softly; "I am afraid you are hasty."

Sybil started up wildly.

"You don't think it can be any one else?"

"I am much afraid it is. Remember how many such resemblances we have found, and the name is really nothing, a mere accidental coincidence in all probability."

"I don't think so."

"Let us go at once and see for ourselves," said Perdita, and moved toward the gates where the carriage was waiting.

But Sybil stood still, half averting her face, one hand still pressed to her beating heart.

"I am so sure it is he," she said, brokenly; "I—I wish, dear—I should like to go alone, please."

Perdita looked surprised, then she smiled faintly.

"Very well," she said; "you shall go alone."

Sybil turned and held out both her hands.

"Do you care very much? Do you think I am very selfish?"

"I think you are very anxious, that is all. I don't think this M. Volné is our Volney. I only wanted to be with you to help you bear the disappointment if it is not he."

"I am so certain it is he that I hold this card in my hand."

"Go then, go alone; I am only his sister, and he does not even know that I am that, perhaps."

She led the young countess quickly to the carriage door.

"I will wait here," she said, with a farewell pressure of Sybil's trembling fingers; "come back soon, to relieve my suspense."

"Rue Genevieve, No. 10."

The carriage whirled away to that modest but respectable quarter.

Sybil sat and strove to calm her agitation and excitement.

"He must be very bitter toward me," she thought, "to have lived near me so long and made no sign. M. Noisette said he had known him three years at least."

Dodd, the coachman, drew up at last before No. 10, Rue Genevieve, and the smart footman let down the steps of the landau for her ladyship.

Sybil's emotion was such she could scarcely command her own movements. She pulled her veil over her face to hide its excitement from her servants.

There was a low flight of broad stone steps before her, with crumpled stone lions on either side.

The footman ran up these and lifted the ponderous Gorgon's head that answered for a knocker.

As its echoes died away Lady Sybil Dane spoke to him.

"Go back to the carriage and wait for me," she said.

The man hesitated an instant involuntarily, struck by the strangeness in her voice.

"Go!" she repeated, imperatively.

As he obeyed her the door opened, and a short, smiling, black-eyed little Frenchwoman stood before her.

Sybil asked if Monsieur Volné were in.

The Frenchwoman nodded and said:

"Out," and asked what name she should give.

Sybil threw back her veil.

"Not any. Please, please," she entreated, piteously, "show me the door of his room and let me go in without any warning. You will, I know," and she pulled out her purse and thrust it into the doubtful Frenchwoman's hand.

It was perhaps as much the sight of the beautiful, lustreless, entreating face as the purse of gold that decided the Frenchwoman.

She led the way with a significant nod and a tripping, noiseless step.

She pointed to a baize-covered door at the head of the landing, and retreated herself to count the contents of the purse and wonder who the beautiful Anglaise could be who came to see the handsome, cold monsieur who saw no one.

Sybil's heart was throbbing so that she could scarcely breathe.

She stood a moment to recover herself, then turned the silver knob, and, trembling so that she was in danger of falling every moment, opened the door and entered.

For an instant Sybil thought she had made some awful mistake, as she hesitated, leaning for support against the carved door-post.

The room was without a carpet, the chairs were of wood, and a wooden table stood in one corner of the room.

There was a low bed and a charcoal stove. It looked blank and desolate as a cell, and no one was in sight.

There was a small alcove at the farther side of the room, and, there being no curtain before it, Sybil advanced silently to see what was there.

A gentleman who stood at a window within turned his head at her approach, and looked at her

with a slow, intent, dilating gaze, the little colour that was in his face fading as he did so.

He turned about mechanically.

For the first time in nearly four years Sybil Dane and her husband stood face to face.

Both were changed, Volney frightfully so—he who might have been this moment living in a palace, as it were, honoured, rich, titled and worshipped by the woman he adored—might have been but for that deceitful folly of his in pretending to be somebody else than himself in order to win the woman he so madly loved.

He had seen the folly of it. He had learned in bitterness and heartache that nothing is ever gained by venturing one step on a sinful path.

He did not even know at this moment that he was the lawful master of all those fine estates it had once been the summit of his wildest dreams to be possessor of.

He did not know that Perdita had become Lady Perdita, and that he had been proved the rightful earl.

He had hid himself here these years hearing nothing and not wishing to hear, a blind misanthrope, sour at all the world, and scarcely caring whether he lived or died, so that he never saw again the face of the wife who had betrayed him to a fate worse than death.

And now here she was lovelier than ever in spite of her black robes, the light in her wonderful eyes undimmed and more lustrous than ever, the delicate face grown more exquisite, the lovely shape rounded and developed into the superb outlines of a magnificent womanhood.

If she had ruled his soul in the old time, if she had once been a sufficient incentive to a course so false as his had been, what was she now?

Volney shivered inwardly with mingled love and anger.

But he met his wife with a cold and unmoved face.

Sybil had ceased to tremble.

Every other sense seemed swallowed up in the joy of finding him.

How handsome he was, thin and haggard, but snow was not whiter than his broad, expansive brow, sapphires could not stream such blue fire as did his eyes now as he looked at her, calm, still, unmoved, save for that dancing glance with which he seemed to search her to the soul.

He appeared to have grown taller, but perhaps that was only the attenuation of long endurance.

Pain had gnawed like fiery teeth at his heart ever since he had first been told that his wife had been the one to contrive his commitment to a French madhouse.

It was Sybil who spoke first.

"Thank Heaven, I have found you at last," she said. "Why have you hidden yourself from me, from all of us, so persistently?"

He looked at her a moment.

"I have not hidden myself," he said, coldly. "I have been here all the time, ever since I got out of the madhouse. Have you come to inveigle me back to it?"

Sybil shuddered.

"Oh, Volney, no! I have come to entreat you to forgive me for ever suspecting you so harshly. Oh, I was mad to do it! Come back to me, Volney, and forgive the past, and I will atone, if life is long enough, for my injustice!"

"Life is not long enough," answered Volney, impatiently, thinking of the agony that had overwhelmed him when Cheeny at the instigation of the French mad doctor said:

"It is your wife who sends you here, she thinks it is most prudent on the whole, and may save trouble."

No, life was not long enough, and the more beautiful this woman was, the more madly he loved her, the less would he forgive her, the harder would he harden his heart against her.

"Don't say that," entreated Sybil. "Come with us—Perdita and me—Perdita your sister, you know. She has been with me almost ever since I lost you. She is with me here now, in Paris. Oh, my husband, if you knew how I have searched for you these years."

(To be continued.)

THE PHILADELPHIANS.—It still remains impossible it seems to find out all the people who own "gold, silver, and other watches in Philadelphia."

The total number of watches returned there for tax is 13,672; and of these there are 12,828 gold, 714 silver, and 85 of other metals. If this were a true return, it would show that Philadelphians are not much addicted to carrying time-keepers about them.

But the whole thing is not only a sham but a gross piece of injustice. There are not less than 100,000 people who carry watches in that city, and of these 13,673 pay taxes on them, while the other 86,000 escape.



[THE INTRODUCTION.]

## HOW IT HAPPENED.

THE Delancys were, unfortunately, poor—very much poorer than any one suspected, which was, in a certain sense, more unfortunate still, for it necessitated the struggle for “appearances” which is so terribly exhaustive to sensitive persons. The Delancys were extremely sensitive. They could endure cold, hunger, and any ordinary deprivation with heroic fortitude, so long as the outside world remained in ignorance of the fact. To keep them in ignorance, to invest with an appearance of luxury the meagre reality behind it, had been for a good half a score of years their “being’s end and aim.”

Yet the world—the keen-eyed and keen-scented world—was but partially deceived. It laughed at their efforts, but did not, with all its astuteness, guess over so faintly at the superhumanness of those efforts.

Therefore when Nina Delancy received an invitation to reside permanently or at least spend the first three months of the new year with Mrs. Santley it was considered that Fortune had at last condescended to bestow a favour upon them.

To be sure Hollywood wasn’t much of a place, and Mrs. Santley was neither wealthy nor distinguished—was in short only a very passable sort of person, socially considered, with some very strait-laced notions, and a great many curious little angles in her composition—nevertheless circumstances rendered the acceptance of the invitation desirable.

Mrs. Santley’s husband had been some sort of a distant relative of Mrs. Delancy, and the families, though never intimate, had maintained a kind of formal friendliness, culminating at long intervals in as formal visits.

Since her husband’s death, however, Mrs. Santley had not been to London, though she had written three times in the two years, and the letters were, as Kate Delancy expressed it, “more like her than she was herself.”

As we have only to do with the last, we will take the liberty of transcribing it.

“RESPECTED FRIENDS,” it ran, “it has occurred to me that Nina might like to ‘live in the country.’ Hollywood is always dull and dreary—unusually dull and dreary this year—but a little dullness is better than the doubtful morality of the fashionable resorts in London for a young girl, who, it is to be hoped, is not quite spoiled yet by the vanities and wickedness of the world—though I am by no means certain of it. If my memory serves me, Nina is seventeen years of age—a mere child, but very likely thinking herself a woman—girls are so forward now. If you like for her to come to Hollywood and make my home her own, I should be much pleased to have her come. I should advise her to leave her finery at home—there are no simpletons here to be astonished or charmed. If she can’t make up her mind to stay at least three months she had better not take the trouble to come at all. Enclosed you will find a bank-note to pay all necessary expenses of the journey. I shall send Frank to the station to meet her at mid-day on New Year’s Eve, Providence permitting.

“Very respectfully

“Your most obedient servant,

“MARIA SANTLEY.”

Now as Nina was the youngest of four sisters, and as the great question of existence for them all had nearly driven the paternal Delancy distracted, it was, as I have said, considered desirable to accept this invitation which took one off his hands for at least three months, and which required no “outfit.” Alicia, Kate and Clarice could divide between them Nina’s share, and thus make a very presentable appearance.

I doubt if Mrs. Santley ever stood quite so favourably in the regards of the Delancys before as on the reception of this rather ungracious letter. It was like a New Year’s gift to them, and one mustn’t be too particular about phrases where such vital interests

as funds are concerned. They all agreed upon this—all but Nina.

Would you mind my introducing Nina to you if I will promise not to be tiresome about it?

A lithe, willowy figure—graceful, and yet with a certain decision and independence in the light, firm step, and proudly poised head, a fair complexion, with wild-rose tints in the cheeks, deepening to coral in the full, curved lips, the softest of golden-brown hair, matched by eyes of the same soft, rare shade, with finely cut features, delicate and refined, but not haughty, and you have Nina Delancy as she looked standing framed in the long western window, and gazing absently off into the hazy distance, the evening after the reception of the letter from Hollywood.

And yet you can get but a meagre idea of her from this portraiture, for it was the girl’s warm, impulsive heart that gave to her face its changeful expression, which constituted its greatest charm.

“Nina,” exclaimed Kate, rebukingly, “you look as if you were sorry at this piece of good fortune.”

“If I thought Mrs. Santley really wished me to come—” Nina began hesitatingly.

“Oh, nonsense!” interrupted Alicia, impatiently. “As if she would do a thing she didn’t wish to, you sensitive little goose!”

“But there doesn’t seem any heart in the invitation,” Nina responded, faintly.

“You unreasonable child!” cried Kate, with a laugh, “to expect anything in that line from our venerated relative. How can one give what they have not got, pray?”

“Oh, hush, Katy!” Nina exclaimed, in a shocked voice. “I am sure she is very good to think of us at all.”

“Good? Oh, yes, there’s no doubt on that point; she’s a perfect paragon of goodness. All the ‘vanities and wickednesses’ which beset ordinary mortals fall harmlessly upon her. So completely intrenched is she in this armour of ‘goodness’ that nothing can reach her through it. I expect it is only another proof of my innate depravity, but I do not like those dreadfully ‘good people.’ If I needed help or sympathy I would far sooner go to one who through experience knew my needs and was thus qualified to help me, and who would not instead give me a chapter of homilies upon the follies and shortcomings of humanity generally, very evidently meaning I should make a personal application of the same.”

“Oh, Kate, please do not talk so,” Nina said, softly. “I am afraid it is wicked, and I know it is uncharitable. It is a life of folly and vanity this life we live. I feel it more and more every day,” and, smiling faintly, added, “I am going to leave it behind me with my ‘finery’ when I go to Hollywood.”

“Nina,” said Clarice, wheeling suddenly round on the piano stool, “hasn’t our respected relative a nephew, or some such connexion, who has taken orders? I’ve a faint recollection to that effect. Possibly this benevolent friend of the family, knowing the straits to which we are sometimes put, has selected you for a wife for him. I daresay he is fifty, a widower, wears spectacles, has long, lank, sandy-gray hair, a stoop in the shoulders, and a chronic melancholy radiating like a halo from his cadaverous face. But what does it matter how one looks? ‘Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain,’ you know, and, as you are the only one in the family who possesses the martyr-spirit to any remarkable degree, it is naturally expected of you that you will sacrifice yourself on the altar of duty, thus securing an ‘eligible settlement,’ as mamma says, a model husband, and a summer resort for your less fortunate elder sisters. Verily, Nina, you are favoured, for doesn’t somebody say ‘whom the gods love marry young’? or something which amounts to substantially the same thing, practically considered. I’m most devoutly thankful the worthy dame didn’t select me for the honour nevertheless.”

And pretty Clarice Delancy, the belle of the family by the way, shrugged her white shoulders in genuine French fashion.

“Oh, Clarice, please don’t!” Nina cried, looking so ludicrously shocked and embarrassed that the girls all laughed in chorus, though Alice hastened to say with more feeling than she had often displayed, being one of those cool, dignified, impassive persons not often betrayed into such weakness:

“You are the only one of us good enough for a martyr, Nina, but I trust no such fate as Clarice depicts is in store for you. And I had rather have you at home a thousand times than to have the most beautiful things in the world if they are bought at the expense of your happiness. There is no obligation, I am sure, about accepting Mrs. Santley’s invitation.”

“Oh, I shouldn’t dare think of refusing,” Nina said, hastily, “but—but the prospect isn’t very delightful, I will admit. I daresay it will all end—”

“In a wedding,” Clarice interrupted, gaily. The express train from London came sweeping round the long bend at the foot of the hill, crossed

the picturesque rivulet half-hidden beneath overhanging trees, and shot away to the little red-bricked building dignified by the name of the "Hollywood Station."

An ancient-looking vehicle, with horse and driver equally venerable, stood by the narrow platform in an unmistakable attitude of waiting.

The ancient Jehu, holding his horse by the bit rein—a precaution by the way wholly unnecessary, as the animal maintained the most stoical composure upon all occasions—glanced indifferently over to where a young lady was standing.

Frank Holman was not a ladies' man, but something in the sweet, earnest young face of the girl, shadowed just now by an expression of timidity and embarrassment, stirred all the latent gallantry in the man's nature, and, dropping the rein, he made his way straight through the few passengers and involuntarily touched his hat to the young girl, whose face suddenly lighted and cleared.

"You're Miss Delancy, aren't you?" he asked, gently.

"Yes," she replied, adding eagerly: "Has Mrs. Santley been expecting me? Did she send you?"

"Oh, yes, miss, she has figured all the morning lest you shouldn't come."

Nina's heart gave a sudden bound, and the faded cushions of the waggonette failed to awaken one throb of regretful memory as she involuntarily contrasted them with the rich velvet and satin ones of the "family carriage," which her mother had rather go cold and hungry than give up.

Hollywood was a quiet, old-fashioned place, the highways clover-bordered and irregular, the houses straight and prim, with grass-grown plots in front, and clumps of lilacs and daffodils under the windows.

How still and sweet the air was, with the dew just falling.

Nina drank in with rare delight the sweet, pastoral beauty of the scene. Sometimes, in picture galleries, she had caught glimpses of such a world as this, but it had been to her more like some ideal of the artist's brain than a real, substantial world like this which now revealed itself to her actual vision.

She was roused from her reverie by a familiar face—the face of Mrs. Santley herself—looking out of an open window, and at the same moment Holman drew up in front of the house with its row of cherry trees in front, saying, sententiously, "Here we are, miss," as he leisurely dismounted.

There was the grating sound of a bolt being withdrawn, and a door opened, and Nina was looking up with a feeling of gratitude for the unexpected cordiality of her reception, when to her dismay a gentleman was coming down the path, and Mrs. Santley was not to be seen.

"Miss Delancy, I presume," he said, smiling, and immediately adding: "Aunt was very sure you would not come, and is very happily disappointed, though it will not be like her to tell you so. This way, Miss Delancy," he added, taking her shawl and preceding her up the path, while the coachman busied himself with her trunk.

Mrs. Santley came out into the hall to meet her, shook hands with her gravely, inquired formally after each member of the family, settled her cap strings, and sat down by the window and folded her hands.

Nina felt a great wave of chill and embarrassment surging up to her feet, and her face flushed painfully.

"Shall I call Lucy, aunt, to show Miss Delancy to her room?" the gentleman who had come out to meet her said, looking in from the hall.

Mrs. Santley gave a little start which more than anything betrayed the undercurrent of excitement which possessed her.

"Certainly, Louis," she answered, almost sharply.

"And perhaps it would be as well for you to tell Miss Delancy who I am now as any other time, as it will have to be done eventually, I suppose," he added, laughingly: "considering that I am to be quartered on you for the present."

The thin face of the aunt flushed, but she betrayed in no other way her mortification at this breach of etiquette of which she had been guilty.

"Miss Delancy," she said, in her most formal tones, "allow me to present to you my grand-nephew, Louis Denbeigh."

Mr. Denbeigh offered his hand with easy cordiality, and Nina lifted a very grateful face to him, though she did not herself know it.

The next morning she wrote home to let them know of her safe arrival. She wrote enthusiastically of Hollywood, but somehow forgot to make any allusion to Mr. Denbeigh.

Mrs. Santley took an early opportunity to inform Nina that Louis Denbeigh was a poor young curate who had his own way to make in the world, and was settled over only a small parish. She always invited him to spend his vacations in Hollywood, and she

hoped Miss Delancy wouldn't mind him at all, as of course she wouldn't; their ways in life being so unlike, etc.

Nina, strangely enough, cried a good hour over this very insignificant thing, and resolved to be very cool and dignified towards Mr. Denbeigh in future. How well she might have kept this resolve if what did happen had not happened will of course never be known.

That same night Mrs. Santley was taken violently ill of a fever, and for more than a week her life was despaired of; but the fierce fever burned itself out at length, and she was pronounced convalescent.

These days and nights of watching and anxiety had revealed the real character of each to each more thoroughly than months of ordinary companionship would have done.

In the pleasant, quiet days of convalescence Mrs. Santley's little formalities and angularities of character fell away like harmless husks, revealing the real tenderness and depth of her nature.

To Louis it was not so much a surprise—he had always understood her better than any one else; but to Nina Delancy it came like a wonderful revelation. Her warm, impulsive heart went out to the lonely little woman in a flood of grateful love.

How happy she had been at Hollywood after all, and what dismal forebodings she had had of it; she determined she would never go back to the old hollow, artificial life again, with its miserable little deceptions and petty make-shifts, its perpetual anxieties and worries and struggles, and all for what?

Somehow life had had a newer and deeper significance of late, and vague yearnings and aspirations for something nobler and better stirred in her soul and added a new grace to her manner and a rarer sweetness to her face.

One day Louis Denbeigh undertook to tell her something of this, and by the oddest blunder in the world stumbled into an out-and-out declaration of love!

I wouldn't pretend that Nina was particularly shocked or sorry, but she was a painfully conscientious little thing, and it seemed to her a piece of arch treason against Mrs. Santley, who had invited her there in confidence, of which this seemed, somehow, a sort of breach or betrayal.

So Louis went straight to his aunt and told the whole story, Nina's misgivings and all. And what do you suppose this wronged and betrayed little woman did?

You wouldn't guess in a lifetime, and though you may be shocked at her duplicity, I will tell you just what she did. She rubbed her thin hands together in enthusiasm, and cried, exultantly:

"Ah! your young eyes were very easily blinded! Don't you see I meant it from the beginning? And so it has all come out, has it?"

I am afraid that you will consider Mrs. Santley strangely inconsistent when I conclude by telling you that with all her horror of "flattery," and the vanities of the world, she insisted on sending to Paris for Nina's trousseau, and after paying for it making her beside a present of five hundred pounds in bank-notes.

And this wasn't the sum of her deceptions. Louis Denbeigh, though settled over a small parish, had a most liberal salary, for the small parish was wealthy, and though it was true, as it is of every young man, that he had his own way to make, he had, nevertheless, the assistance of a handsome little fortune to do it with—a very convenient help, by the way.

I do not believe Nina, at the time, cared a single straw for Louis's fortune.

But you and I, dear reader, who have learned that neither man nor woman can live by love alone, can smile at her infatuation, knowing that sooner or later she will be very glad of it.

In regard to the "family," I may here add, that they fully appreciated the little item mentioned above, particularly as it provided a nice summer resort for the girls, without the many discomforts of hotel life, especially the bills.

Clarice declared herself entitled to a place among the prophets, for had she not foretold all this when Mrs. Santley's invitation came? Possibly she had not exactly sketched her brother-in-law's *personelle*, but in regard to the "great essentials," she said, with a gay laugh, "she would challenge the whole army of astrologers to prophesy more correctly." R. B. E.

Fort paper-knives, made from the wreck of the "Royal George," were recently sold by auction in London.

EX-LORD CHANCELLORS.—There are now five ex-Lord Chancellors, each in receipt of 5,000*l.* a year as pension—Lord St. Leonards, Lord Chelmsford, Lord Westbury, Lord Cairns, and Lord Abberley.

LES PETITS RIENS.—M. V. Wilder has discovered the unpublished score of a ballet by Mozart in the library of the Paris Opera. The ballet

was written in 1778, when Mozart was staying in Paris, and the piece was represented under the name of Noverre, and was called "Les Petits Riens."

## GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

GORGEOUS and elegant in furniture, the banquet-room of Madame Stella compared well with the portions of her mansion already seen and described.

Escorted by Zane, the queenly owner of all this magnificence entered the room, and, motioning Volchinski and the fair Georgine to take seats on the right, placed Zane at the head of the table, while she took his left, as she said with a smile, to be near his heart.

Then at the touch of a silver-toned bell servants entered bearing the first course—a delicious soup, and with it wine. Georgine, whose veins thrilled with the effect of what she had already taken, and with the thought that it had added to her beauty in his eyes, did not now refuse to taste the glass which Volchinski filled for her, and as slowly course after course came in, a new wine with each, she drank, and ate, and smiled, and talked till she forgot all but one thing—Volchinski loved her, was there, and she was happy.

The latter, confident now that she was wholly in his power, for he knew that when he chose he could make her utterly helpless through the wine—devoted a part of his time to what might be termed business in regard to Zane.

For he remembered his promise to Bludge, to get for Bonny Doon the command of the yacht. That could be done better now than later, for he had Stella to aid him, and Zane was just mellow enough to be pliant on every point.

"You have purchased the yacht?" Volchinski said, inquiringly, after a glass of wine with Zane.

"Yes," replied the latter. "I have bought and named her the 'Stellarita,' in honour of our lovely hostess!"

"It is a beautiful name! Who will sail her for you, for of course you must have a captain and crew?"

"That bothers me! If I were on good terms with my old father-in-law, I could go to him, and let him pick them out. He owns ships, and knows lots of captains and sailors. I don't!"

"How fortunate! They are a vulgar set, and a man of your position is not expected to know them. I know one, however, who is not vulgar, for he was born a gentleman, and only took to a nautical life when fortune deserted him. He is of French descent, from an ancient and noble family. His name is Phorosterra!"

"Oh, what a romantic name!" said Stella. "I like the name. I would give him the command of the yacht for that alone, if I were you, dear Edward!"

"He shall have it—he shall have it, as true as I am a millionaire!" said Zane, who was fast yielding to the influence of the wine which both Stella and Volchinski plied him with.

"He can save you all trouble—select a crew, put your yacht in order, and all that," continued Volchinski.

"When can I see him?"

"If you desire, I will engage him on the best terms I can and send him on board."

"Do, my dear fellow, do—make what terms you like—I'll stick to them—I'll stick to them. Send him aboard and tell him to get a crew—draw on me for any—any amount!"

"I will do it; and we will have glorious times in your beautiful yacht, for I know you will invite me and my dear Georgine to cruise with you."

"To be sure I will. Glorious sport, this yachting—glorious sport, eh, Stella?"

"I think it will be, Edward, for you know I have not tried it yet."

"That's a fact. But you shall, Stella—you shall, by jingo. Glad my wife can't go."

"Mr. Zane!"

The stern tone and look of Stella startled Zane almost to soberness.

"What's the matter, Stella?" he stammered. "I didn't mean to offend you. What did I do?"

"You spoke of her in my presence, sir!"

"Oh—I forgot—I forgot. I'll never do it again. Come—forgive me, darling!"

"I will—but be careful hereafter. Fill your glass, fill yours also, fair Georgine, and you, my dear count—we will drink a bumper to our future happiness!"

The glasses were filled, and with a meaning glance at poor Georgine, who was becoming more and more helpless, even as her flushed countenance seemed to heighten her beauty, Stella said:

"To you and yours, most noble count."

"Ten thousand thanks from me and mine!" he responded, while his eyes turned in a burning look

upon the lovely girl who was now in a net from which there seemed no escape.

Each moment Zane was becoming more and more inebriate, and more and more foolish, and now, to give the count an opportunity to carry out his plans, Stella proposed to the former to take a short walk in the garden to breathe the fresh air.

"My fair guest will excuse us a little while," she said, "for the count may escort her to my boudoir and there await our return."

"Oh, I must return home. It must be late, and I never stay out late. It would ruin my good name if I did."

"My dearest girl, you must not think of leaving me to-night," said Stella, earnestly. "You shall rest on my own couch, and in the morning I will see you home in my own carriage, and who will dare to speak ill of you? Time has flown on rapid wings, my love, and it is almost midnight."

"And I have something to say, my own sweet love, which can only be said when we are alone! Come with me to the boudoir, while they go to the garden to walk," whispered the count.

"Oh, count, in mercy take me home. I feel so weak and faint. I am sure it is the wine!"

"Come to the boudoir, dear love, and I will bathe your head. And then, if you will, I will call a carriage, but come for a few moments, at least till you feel better!"

"Stop!" came a voice like thunder to each ear.

"Yaw! Stop! Dot vos vot dis old man, dis Fadder Meduaniem said!"

When the word "stop" was thus thundered out by the old man, and followed up by the red-faced Teuton, Von Guzle, Edward Zane, arm-in-arm with Stella Hayden, was passing to the rear door leading from the banquet-room, while Georgine, half-reclining on the shoulder of the count, was passively going whither he chose to lead.

Had the lightning bolt which precedes thunder stricken each before the words reached their ears they could not have been more suddenly paralyzed than they now seemed.

Sobered almost, Edward Zane turned on the intruders, while the count, full of conscious guilt, stood and trembled, coward-like, half-releasing the frightened girl.

Stella Hayden was the first to speak—the first to show that, bad as she was, she at least had courage.

"Who are you, and how dare you intrude yourselves into my house?" she sternly demanded. "Speak quickly, before I summon my servants to kick you from my presence!"

"If dot you mean Chames, me leave him to make do door safe mit a gag in his mouth, and his hands tied before, and his legs behind his back!" said Von Guzle, coolly.

"Woman, your servants are secured, and it's with us you have to deal!" said the old man, in a voice but too earnest—a voice which made Edward Zane tremble.

"Robbers, I will call the police!" cried Stella, angrier yet.

"Yaw—dat is just right. Call them police und we make 'em take you all to der station-house!"

"This is intolerable! Come, Georgine, my love—come, we will leave the room, and I will summon assistance!" cried Volchini, trying to lead Georgine away.

"Stop, little gal—stop und go not away mit dat bad man!"

And, as he spoke, Von Guzle stepped between the count and the door he intended to reach in his retreat.

"Idiot, I will shoot you down!" cried Volchini. "Yes—stand out of my way, or I will shoot you down!"

"Not just now!" said Von Guzle, coolly, as he wrenched the pistol from the hand that drew it. "Now, Mr. Count No-account, just keep where you are, or I makes a funeral! Lettle gal, don't cry—me von shall hurt you!"

"Once more I bid you leave!" cried Stella, now turning, and boldly walking up to the spot where the old man stood.

"When my deluded son-in-law sees fit to go with me home to his faithful, sorrowing wife Madame Stella Hayden will be relieved of my presence, and not before."

"Dot's it, Mister Paga—dot's do way to come down on 'em!" cried Von Guzle, heartily.

"Heaven and earth, it is Mr. Everts—it is my father-in-law!" cried Edward Zane, sobered almost by the shame of his position.

"Yes, Edward, it is I!" said the merchant, who had taken off and cast down his false hair and beard. "I have come to save you from the wiles of that infamous woman, whose character I am ready to unveil. I have come to save you from your own folly."

"Edward Zane, will you hear that man abuse me—one who loves you and is ready to sacrifice all for you!" cried Stella Hayden, seeing that her dupe stood there trembling with fear and shame.

"Heartless woman, I claim him while there is yet time, for the sake of my only child."

"Mr. Everts, to spare this lady's feelings I will go from this house with you," said Zane, recovering something like composure.

"Edward, Edward, do not leave me!" she cried, imploringly.

"It is for your sake I go. The man who pretends to be a Dutchman is an officer. They would never come here without official backing. I will go and come again!" said Zane, in a low tone, while she clung to him.

An officer? The bold woman was terrified.

Pretending to weep bitterly, she said:

"Go, if you will, go! No other man has made me love so madly—no other man can fill the void you leave!"

Edward Zane moved toward the door.

But Mr. Everts had not finished yet.

"Young lady!" said he to Georgine. "You look too innocent to be a willing inmate of a house so infamous as this."

"Infernal!" she gasped. "Oh, count, what does this mean?"

Volchini trembled.

He believed that without official support Mr. Everts would not dare so much, and he feared arrest.

"Since that villain, that pretended count, that real libertine and gambler dares not answer you I will!" said the merchant, firmly.

"Silence, sir, I implore you! Take her and go."

He is not man enough to claim her—take her and go!" cried Stella, as Georgine, completely overcome, sank fainting, and would have fallen had not the strong arms of the detective caught her.

"Yes, she shall be taken home, I hope in time, for she does not look like one who holds guilt within her soul. Bring her out, Mr. Stokes, and when she revives we will take her to her home if she has one—if not, at any rate beyond the reach of these harpies. Mr. Zane, my carriage is outside."

Moving mechanically, as if he would, but yet dared not, turn back, Edward Zane preceded the merchant, while Stokes, carrying Georgine in his arms as if she had been an infant, brought up the rear. Thus they left the room and the house, passing James, who was gagged and bound in the hall, without a word.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

"COWARD!" was the word rather missed than spoken which fell on the ears of Volchini, who stood as if palsied while his intended victim was carried from the house.

It came from the lips of Stella Hayden, whose painted cheeks alone gave contrast to her bloodless lips, her white brow, where the blue veins, swollen like whip-cords, seemed as if they would burst through the skin, while her eyes emitted that changing, flashing, scorching light which you may only see in the eyes of an infuriated rattlesnake as it rises to strike, or in the head of a maddened fiend—woman like herself.

"Coward!" she hissed again.

He turned ashen white, but he did not reply, while she passed to and fro in the room with both hands pressed over her bosom as if she would keep still her madly throbbing heart.

"Idiot!" she hissed again.

He did not reply.

"Dog of an Italian! Why do you not speak?" she cried, her anger increased by his silence.

"Because I have nothing to say!" he answered, in a low tone.

"Then leave!"

He turned to go.

"Stop!" she cried, angry, even, that he obeyed her.

"We have an account to settle before you go!"

"If you have a bill against me send it to my hotel!"

"A bill? Ha! ha! As if I would take money from a beggar like you!"

"For Heaven's sake say mendicant—beggar is vulgar! I never craved alms of you or any one else!"

"No—you would rather steal!"

"Madam—adieu. I cannot remain to be abused."

Volchini turned to go.

"Stop!" she cried.

He kept on, but a quick, sharp sound—too well he knew what it was—the click of a revolver as the nipple was drawn back—reached his ear. He stopped and turned to see its barrel on a level with his head.

"Stella—madam, please lower that weapon."

"I will, coward, conditionally. Come back here, sir, and sit down!"

Volchini obeyed, trembling. He knew how desperate she was—how little she would hesitate to dispose of his life. He did not want to die. He was not ready.

Who is? That's the question.

"Now, sir—as I am getting calm, I can talk to

you. Will you obey me and remedy the mishaps of this night so far as you can?"

"You know that I will if I can—but what could I do? I expect old Everts had a platoon of police at the door, and arrest would be sure to me, for I have plans which it would break as sure as it was made."

"If I had been in your place, instead of dallying and waiting so long with that meek girl, she would have been in the boudoir chamber and out of the way two hours ago."

"I was so confident of success that I did not think haste necessary."

"Now you see it was. Delay has lost her to you!"

"No—if not now—she yet shall be mine. I have sworn it. I will not give her up. She loves me!"

"She will not after your cowardly desertion of her. Had you clung to her, defied them, fought for her, she would have been yours yet. As it is—I know women too well to believe you can ever regain her!"

"I will by fair means or foul. I never was so desperately in love as I am with her."

"You looked desperate a few moments ago."

"Madam, I can bear your sarcasm."

"Of course you can bear it better than lead. You know you are vulnerable to the last; against the first you wear brass armor."

"You are very witty, madam, for one who has met such a loss as you have to-night."

"Do you mean my diamonds, or Edward Zane?"

"Both."

"I have not lost either irretrievably. I will recover the first, and he will come back to me of his own accord the first time he is in liquor. While he is kept sober he may keep away—but the moment he drinks he is mine again."

"There is reason in that."

"I know it. And you must manage that he does drink again."

"I will do my best to effect the object."

"You must effect it. They may get him to sign a pledge now—they may keep him close within doors—if they do he will be ill, for he has drunk too much lately to break off suddenly and retain his health. If so the physician must be bribed; or should he go to his yacht it must be managed there, even if force be used. He must get under the effect of liquor and be kept there, or he is lost to me, and to you and Bludge as well."

"I know it, and will carry out your plan."

"Then call on me for what ready money you need. And now you can retire to a chamber here, or go to your hotel. The latter, perhaps, will be best, for the fair Georgine may make some confessions when she is brought to that will cause her friends to come here to look for you."

"She has no friends. I told you she was an orphan."

"Mr. Everts, then, may become her friend. He is rather chivalric for an old man I take it."

"I'll be the death of him for his interference."

"I would as quickly intrude his life after you threatened it as before," said Stella, smiling bitterly. "Ah, Volchini, I know you better than you know yourself. But go now, so that you may rise early and work out some plan to keep Ned Zane in our hands. If nothing else can be done, bribe the servant in his house. Do anything—everything that can be done to keep him in our hands."

"I will. Adieu!"

Volchini left the house, and in doing so discovered the situation of the servant James, and released him.

(To be continued.)

#### FACETIÆ.

##### TENDING A HAIR.

Customer: "I think my hair's getting gray, isn't it?"

Hairstylist: "Well, really, sir, I can't say but what it do seem to be meditating a change of color.—Fun."

##### THAT'S IT.

Mistress: "Why, Mary, what's that you've got on?"

Mary: "What is it? A Dolly Varden, of course."

Mistress: "You with a Dolly Varden? Why, I shouldn't think of wearing such a thing."

Mary: "Praps not, miss. It ain't everybody they becomes."—*July Almanack, 1873.*

THE WEATHER AND THE MARKS.—Winds rule high. Chimney-pots have a downward tendency. Tiles rose at first, but there has been a considerable fall in them since. Timber is down. From Brighton and other watering-places no sails reported. Floods are on the rise. Considerable animation has prevailed in drying-grounds, linen and calico fluctuating violently. Telegraph posts continue firm, but messages for prompt delivery show no improvement

on previous dullness. Gas is dull. Managers of companies are firm. In stokers on strike there is an absence of animation, though the demand continues steady. Inquiries about the weather active.—*Punch*.

A MAN recently broke off a marriage because the lady did not possess good conversational powers. A cynical friend, commenting on the fact, says, "He should have married her and refused her a new bonnet, then he would have discovered her conversational powers!"

A SHAKESPEARIAN was reading "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to the sailors of a ship on which he was crossing the Atlantic, and they listened with pleasure till he came to a passage which describes a mermaid sitting on a dolphin's back, when an old salt burst out, "That's nonsense! A dolphin's back is as sharp as a razor, and no mermaid could ride one till she had saddled him."

#### OFFENCES OF THE PAST YEAR.

Knocking people down with a feather.  
Throwing dust in their eyes.  
Blowing them up.  
Stealing kisses.  
"Taking silk."  
Murdering tunes.  
Robbing Peter to pay Paul.  
Setting fire to the Thames.  
Roasting friends.  
Cutting up authors.  
Quarrelling with bread and butter.  
—*Punch's Almanack*, 1873.

#### ANECDOTES OF HIGH LIFE.

Mr. Swellington (who is fond of letting people know he is acquainted with the aristocracy): "I assure you, my dear fellow, I was staying at a country-house the other day, and the master—most intimate friend of mine—rang for the chef, and asked him why the dooce they all objected to Australian beef? 'Well, my lord,' says the chef, 'I really can't give any precise reason for it.'"

Mr. Griggaby (who is fond of chaffing Mr. Swellington): "Ah! very interesting story! I was staying at a country-house too. The missus (reg'lar old pal o' mine) rang for the sub-vice-deputy-assistant-groom of the chambers, and put the very same question to him. 'Well, yer grace,' says he, 'I'm blowed if I know!'" —*Punch*.

WHAT WILL SHE DO WITH IT?—At the Yorkshire Christmas Cattle Show a "silver-mounted claret jug" was taken by a cow. No one will grudge the cow this or any other distinction which it merits and good conduct deserves, but it is not easy to see what pleasure or benefit such an animal (strictly teetotal in its habits) can derive from the possession of a claret jug. Claret is not the usual beverage of cows, and, even if it were, the jugs which hold it are so constructed that it would be impossible for those creatures to drink out of them; and the mere contemplation of a claret jug, silver mounted and all, must be a matter of indifference even to the most high-bred cows. Altogether, one feels that a new wooden pail, filled with ordinary fresh water, would have been a far more useful present.—*Punch*.

#### NATURAL HISTORY OF THE PAST YEAR.

Butterflies were broken on wheels.  
Cats looked at kings.  
Cricketers made ducks' eggs.  
Little birds whispered in the ear.  
A good many mare's nests were discovered.  
People smelt a rat.  
Others were still as a mouse.  
Others pinked crows.  
Others took "tricks."  
Birds of a feather flocked together.  
Puppies and bull dogs were as numerous as ever.  
Cucumbers maintained their usual coolness.  
Unsuccessful attempts were again made to put salt on birds' tails, to catch wasps asleep, and to introduce pigeon's milk.  
The British lion had a strong dose of "Geneva" administered to him.—*Punch's Almanack*, 1873.

#### MEDITATIONS UPON MATRIMONY. (By a Married Man.)

Life is beset with dangerous temptations. When you take your wife down Regent Street always leave your purse at home.

In connubial arithmetic a husband must be reckoned as less than half a man when his better half is with him.

Pity the poor gentleman whose wife will have a latch-key!

Marriage would in many cases be a blissful state if it were not for cold mutton.

When you detect a wife's unusual affection for her husband you may expect to see her before long in a new bonnet.

Pleasant is the Derby Day with bachelor acquaintances; but a trip to a West End jeweller's is a costly price to pay for it.

If your wife says, "Dear mamma is coming for a week or so," you may prepare your mind to receive her for a month or two.

Lovers sometimes rave about the sunshine that

gilds a married life; but when they come to bask in it they find it is mere moonshine.—*Punch's Almanack*, 1873.

#### THE LOST UMBRELLA.

Young Blifkins, son of old Blifkins the banker, was recently caught in a shower, and took refuge under the portico of a dwelling. A very attractive young lady who sat by the open window, seeing his situation, sent out a servant to him with an umbrella. Blifkins went away in ecstasy, and, on the following day, having attired himself in most elaborate and stunning array of starch and jewels, he took the umbrella, which was an old one, and laid it away with his treasures of conquest as a souvenir; and then he went forth and purchased an affair to replace it of the most beautiful and costly kind. Thus equipped, he called upon the lady to return the flattering loan. She admitted him to her presence, and received the umbrella without apparently noticing the exchange; and it was not until she had listened with becoming gravity to his highly dramatic acknowledgments that the truth beamed upon her. She saw that he laboured under the enchanting impression that she had been smitten by his appearances.

"Weally," said Blifkins, in sweet, poetic mood. "Yonah tender act touched me. Aw, it touched me deeply—it did—'pon honaw."

"Indeed, sir," replied the maiden, with charming naïveté, "there was no need of this gratitude on your part. As you stood beneath our portico you obstructed my view of a gentleman at an opposite window who had been observing me, and I sent the umbrella as the readiest means to get rid of your unwelcome presence."

Blifkins went home, and broke up the old umbrella, and consigned its hated fragments to the ash barrel.

#### TAKE BACK THE LOVE YOU OFFERED ME.

TAKE back the love that thrilled my being,

Take back your presents, one and all;

My aching heart is plainly seeing

Thy base desert, love's cruel fall!

I trusted once, and loved you dearly,

My heart had never loved before,

But now I see my error clearly,

And you and I must meet no more.

Chorus.—Take back your love, the dear words spoken,

And leave me to a cruel fate;

For it is true my heart is broken,

But I can never learn to hate.

How cruelly you have deceived me,

What bitter was in my heart;

I need not say that it doth grieve me,

The thought that we so soon must part!

But our brief dream of love is clouded,

Our weary hearts are filled with pain,

And we must keep our sorrow shrouded,

It will not do to meet again.

Take back your love, though it was cheerful,

Take back your presents, one and all,

I am not weak if I am fearful,

Tears answer love's unwearied call.

But we must part, and part for ever,

My dreams of happiness will cease;

Our pleasant friendship we must sever,

And then my heart will beat in peace.

T. D. C. M.

#### GEMS.

He alone is independent who can maintain himself by his own exertion unaided and alone.

To be vain of what you have learned is the same as to plume yourself on a piece of game you have received from a hunter.

It is no disgrace not to be able to do everything; but to undertake or pretend to do what you are not made for is not only shameful but extremely troublesome and vexatious.

THOUGH we may have a hard pillow yet it is only in that camp that a thorn is in it; and even though it may be hard and lonely yet we may have sweet sleep and glorious visions upon it. It was when Jacob was lying on a stone for a pillow that he had glorious visions of the ladder reaching to heaven.

DECEMBER 6TH (ST. NICHOLAS DAY).—St. Nicholas is the patron saint of Russia, also of New York. In the last-named place the inhabitants have dedicated one of the largest hotels in the world to the memory of good St. Nicholas. The saint was a native of Asia Minor. St. Nicholas is commonly represented with a tub containing three naked children, in memory of one of his miracles performed in a time of great scarcity, when a certain man, being short of provisions, seized some little children, cut them up, salted their limbs, and served them up to his guests. He set a dish of pickled infant before St.

Nicholas, who, at once perceiving what it contained, went to the tub where the limbs were in salt, offered up some prayers, and restored the children alive and whole. He died Bishop of Myra, A.D. 326.—*Licensed Victuallers' Year Book*.

#### STATISTICS.

THE RATEABLE VALUE OF THE METROPOLIS.—From an official return recently prepared by the direction on the Hackney District Board of Works it appears that the rateable value of the various districts and parishes within the metropolitan area is as follows: Marylebone 1,173,316*l.*, St. Pancras 1,105,834*l.*, Lambeth 770,000*l.*, St. George, Hanover Square, 1,241,180*l.*, Islington 981,156*l.*, Shoreditch 446,420*l.*, Paddington 920,544*l.*, Bethnal Green 275,508*l.*, Newington 280,000*l.*, Camberwell 330,000*l.*, St. James, Westminster 513,158*l.*, Clerkenwell 261,744*l.*, Chelsea 326,972*l.*, Kensington 816,308*l.*, St. Luke 243,812*l.*, St. George, Southwark, 175,000*l.*, Bermondsey 234,000*l.*, St. George-in-the-East 234,000*l.*, St. Martin-in-the-Fields 300,564*l.*, Hamlet of Mile-end Old-town 255,552*l.*, Woolwich 69,400*l.*, Rotherhithe 126,000*l.*, Hampstead 236,680*l.*, Whitechapel 325,808*l.*, Westminster 457,364*l.*, Greenwich 334,990*l.*, Wandsworth 554,220*l.*, Hackney 570,788*l.*, St. Giles 318,200*l.*, Holborn 324,407*l.*, Strand 315,524*l.*, Fulham 279,500*l.*, Limehouse 273,424*l.*, Poplar 481,440*l.*, St. Saviour 194,000*l.*, Finsbury 205,084*l.*, Lewisham 310,000*l.*, St. Olave 111,000*l.*

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE white flag still floats over the jail of Tiverton. Mr. Governor Crabb reported the other day that the borough jail had been empty 205 days.

LADY BURDETT COULTS and a committee of ladies have sent 100*l.* to the London School Board, to be applied in teaching the children in the Board schools to avoid any description of cruelty to dumb creatures.

AN Arab surgeon, Mohammed Ali Bey, who has just cured the mother of the Khedive of a serious malady, which has deeply affected her health, has received from his patient a fee of 1,000*l.* sterling and been raised by the Viceroy to the rank of Pacha.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.—A lady residing in the diocese has recently offered 1,500*l.* towards the 2,000*l.* required for the execution of the canopies to the stalls, the gift being on condition that the other moiety is raised by Christmas, 1873.

RISE IN PRICES IN ITALY.—Italy is complaining of the rise in prices, like the rest of the world. A Naples correspondent says:—"Taxation and the general rise of provisions elsewhere are however beginning to tell here, and the cost of living is now more than double what it was before 1860. Good beef and annecchia, which sold then at 1 franc to 1 franc 50 cents the rotolo, now fetches from 1 franc 90 cents to 2 francs 40 cents; mutton, worth then from 60 centesimi to 80 centesimi, is now sold for 1 franc 20 cents to 1 franc 50 cents; good maccheroni, which could have been purchased for 35 centesimi, is now worth from 60 to 75 cents; and everything else in proportion. The price of the country wine, too, was in those days from 15 to 20 centesimi the carafa, and so cheap was it in many districts that the proprietors would, before the new vintage, sell it at one gram for each carafa, and, failing to find customers, give it away to all who ask for it. Now drinkable wine cannot be purchased in Naples for less than half-a-franc the bottle, even if you can find it good at that price, for before it gets into the hands of the consumer a considerable adulteration has taken place."

CURIOUS MARRIAGE CEREMONY.—At St. George's, Bloomsbury, the other day these were joined together in holy matrimony a perfectly deaf-and-dumb bridegroom and a deaf-and-dumb bride. Neither, however, we learned, was born deaf and dumb. The clergyman read the service very slowly aloud, for the benefit of the congregation, and at the same time, with a considerable amount of gesticulation, by means of the deaf-and-dumb alphabet upon his fingers, for the enlightenment of the happy couple. The bride and bridegroom took their allotted parts in the service by means of their fingers, and no real difficulty occurred except in those parts where under ordinary circumstances the hands of the two persons should have been joined. A little amusement was caused by the inability of the bride to explain that a certain gentleman who had been put forward by those officiating was not the one she had herself chosen for a partner; but the clergyman soon came to the relief of the distressed bride. In the more interesting parts specially concerning the bride and bridegroom the gestures were of that loving description that no knowledge of the dumb alphabet was required by the congregation in order to interpret them aright.

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THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' YEAR BOOK FOR 1873 is the first number of a work which we have no doubt is destined to run a very successful career. To that section of the community whose interests are in one way or another connected with the influential trade to which it appeals principally for support the volume presents a mass of information both entertaining and valuable—such as, for instance, useful tables for reducing spirits to various strengths, and showing their comparative values at different rates of duty; a digest of the laws regulating the sale of intoxicating liquors; events, festivals, and anniversaries; obituary for 1872; biographical sketches and portraits of prominent persons, etc., etc.; while the history of the noble institutions originated and supported by the Licensed Victuallers—viz., the Incorporated Society, the School, and the Asylum—cannot fail to be interesting to the general public.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. R. Y.—Twenty-five pounds is the largest sum that can be deposited in a Post Office Savings' Bank.

BESSIE.—We are not cognizant of any alteration. At all events that address would most probably duly reach the desired destination.

HENRY P.—For original tales permission must certainly be obtained. There was once a dispute with Mr. Charles Reade, the distinguished novelist, on this very subject; and Mr. Reade won his point.

AMERICA.—A local bank might possibly cash the notes, but they would of course require to be paid for so cashing them, and we think it altogether very dubious. There is a Bureau de Change close by the Charing Cross Railway Station.

F. K. CARCAS.—Is not your communication rather astonishing? Why, the style of your letter might justify any conclusion. How can we express any opinion concerning your sanity? We fail to perceive what you are aiming at.

A. J. W.—We do not know but that the following might serve your purpose, what is called Japan for Turin. Oil of turpentine 8 oz.; copal 2 oz.; camphor 1 drachm. This may be coloured with lamp black or with vermilion.

A READER.—The only society at present recorded in the London Directory for 1873 is the Victoria Assurance Society (Arthur J. Cook, secretary), 49, Fleet Street. We do not know if this be the one, as your designation is somewhat different.

ALICE.—The lines, 'hough tender and feminine, and not deficient in the certain grace, and therefore so far creditable to yourself, are hardly up to the requisite standard for publication. Practice, however, makes perfect in the mechanical part of the "Art of Poetry," though not certainly in any other. To the question you ask we should certainly be disposed to reply in the affirmative.

H. C.—There is a capital German grammar in Weale's Shilling Series, which would be very serviceable for a beginner. Ollendorff's system is fuller and more explanatory, but it is more expensive considerably (half a guinea). If expense is a minor object we should advise you to buy Ollendorff; otherwise the other book would be useful for a season to go on. Get also by all means a book of Dialogues in German and English.

LEWA.—The distinction may be briefly stated thus: An idiot (*idiot*, an inexperienced person) is in law one who has been born totally without understanding. A lunatic, on the other hand, is one who has lost it by illness, grief, or some other cause. Commissions are issued upon petition by the Lord Chancellor to determine whether or not a party be under such incapacity as to require protection in the management of his affairs.

ELGIVA A.—Dolly Varden is the name of a character in Dickens's romantic tale of "Barnaby Rudge." The recent revival of the picturesque feminine costume of the period in which the historical incidents of the story occurred may have been caused by a picture of Dolly Varden once in the Royal Academy. In this painting she is represented attired in the piquant dress then popular—the small straw hat, gaily flowered dress and quaintly quilted petticoat.

A. B. C.—I. To make ten gallons of grape wine, imperial measure.—Take fifty pounds of unripe grapes and thirty-seven pounds of fine moist sugar. Provide a tub that will hold from fifteen to twenty gallons, taking care that it has a hole for a tap near the bottom. In this tub bruise the grapes; when done add four gallons of water; let the whole be well stirred together; cover the tub with a cloth or blanket, and let the materials stand for twenty-four hours; then draw off the liquor through the tap; add one or two more gallons of water to the pulp,

let it be well stirred, and then allowed to remain an hour or two to settle, then draw off; mix the two liquors together, and in it dissolve the sugar. Let the tub then be made clean, and return the liquor to it, cover it with a blanket, and place it in a room the temperature of which is not below sixty degrees Fahrenheit. Here it is to remain for twenty-four, forty-eight, or more hours, until there is an appearance of fermentation having begun, when it should be drawn off into the ten-gallon cask, as far as possible, which cask must be filled up to the bung-hole with water if there is not liquor enough; let it lean to one side a little that it may discharge itself; if there is any liquor left in the tub not quite due, pass it through flannel, and fill it up with that liquor rather than with water. As the fermentation proceeds and the liquor diminishes, it must be filled up daily to encourage the fermentation for ten or twelve days; it then becomes more moderate, when the bung should be put in, and a gimlet hole made at the side of it, fitted with a spile; this spile should be taken out every two or three days according to the state of the fermentation—and also for eight or ten days to allow some of the carbonic acid gas to escape. When this state is passed the cask may be kept full by pouring a little liquor in at the vent hole once a week or once in ten days for three or four weeks. This last operation is performed at intervals of a month or more till the end of December, when on a fine frosty day it should be drawn off from the lees as fine as possible; the turbid part to be passed through the flannel. Make the cask clean, return the liquor to it, with one drachm of isinglass (pure) dissolved in a little water; stir the whole together, and put the bung in firmly. Choose a clear, dry day in March for bottling. They should be champagne bottles—common wine bottles are not strong enough; secure the corks in a proper manner with wire, etc. The liquor is generally made up to two or three pints over the ten gallons which is bottled for the purpose of filling the cask as may be required. It has always spirit enough without the addition of brandy. A proper fermentation always produces an adequate quantity of spirit. 2. A bottle of dye is the cheapest and readiest mode.

## A DREAM.

Sighing alone in my chamber,  
I dreamt of an angel fair,  
A vision, whose heavenly presence  
Glided away into air.  
Her beauty it beckoned me onward  
To Dreamland, and realms of delight,  
Where, softly as winds in the autumn,  
Music still floats on the night.  
As the rays of a bright glare of sunshine  
Fall clear on a dull wintry day,  
So on this soul, filled with sadness,  
Acted her magical way—  
And carried my spirit, still dreaming,  
Far away to the valley of light,  
Where breezes Eolian were stirring,  
And waited me out of the night.  
Sighing and dreaming, I followed  
Through shadowy avenues far,  
Led on by this vision of beauty,  
Gleaming bright as the evening star.  
Far, far away had I wandered,  
My soul in ecstatic pain,  
When a shadow of darkness fell o'er me,  
And I never saw my fairy again. A. L.

LIZA, nineteen, average height, considered pretty, and loving. Respondent must be loving, fond of home and children.

AMIE, nineteen, tall, fair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, and fair complexion; a mechanic preferred.

TEDDY F., twenty-three, dark complexion, and in the Navy. Respondent must be about eighteen, of an affectionate disposition.

NED, twenty-three, tall, and fair, would like to correspond with a young lady of a loving nature; a milliner preferred.

RICHARD K., twenty-four, and handsome, would like to become acquainted with a young lady who could keep a home clean.

KITTY T., tall, fair, twenty-one, good looking, fond of home. Respondent must be tall, and fair; a tradesman preferred.

JERRY I., twenty, good looking, and in a good situation. Respondent must be about the same age, and must be pretty and loving.

JOE, twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., dark complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about nineteen, amiable, and well educated.

TOMMY DOD, thirty, handsome, and in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady who would not object to go abroad.

ALBERT, twenty-three, and fond of home. Respondent must be domesticated, affectionate, accomplished, and a good housekeeper.

RALPH H., twenty-seven, tall, handsome, and has a little business of his own, wishes to correspond with a well-educated young lady.

FRANK G., twenty-five, tall, dark hair and eyes, and a tradesman's son. Respondent must be about the same age, and affectionate.

ARTHUR, nineteen, a young workman, respectfully connected, tall, and dark. Respondent must be pretty, fond of music, and of a loving disposition.

PAULINE, tall, dark, good figure, and considered good looking. Respondent must be a respectable tradesman.

AMIE, twenty, short, stout, fair, brown eyes, good teeth, and considered pretty. Respondent must be steady, and a tradesman.

CARRIE, eighteen, plain looking, good figure, light complexion, and able to make a working-man's home comfortable.

JULIA M., nineteen, tall, black hair, brown eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be loving and affectionate.

NELLY J., eighteen, medium height, dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes, and considered good looking.

Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, fair, and able to make a wife happy; a tradesman preferred.

BILLY W., twenty-seven, medium height, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be tall, and about twenty-three.

MIRIAM, seventeen, dark eyes, and light-brown hair. Respondent must be a respectable tradesman in a business of his own.

FLORA S., nineteen, medium height, good looking, fair complexion, dark hair, has talent, and would like to go on the stage, wishes to correspond with a good-looking young gentleman.

CHARLIE, twenty-five, tall, light hair, handsome, and of an affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady who is pretty, loving, domesticated, and about his own age.

W. W. W., twenty-three, light complexion, an office in the Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, tall, fair complexion, loving, accomplished, fond of home and children.

LISBETH, thirty, fair, medium height, affectionate, well educated, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man who is about her own age, tall, dark, and of a loving disposition.

W. B., thirty-three, 5ft. 8in., dark hair, considered good looking, in a good situation, would like to correspond with a young lady between twenty and thirty, and fond of home.

A. B. (Derbyshire), thirty, short, stout, blue eyes, golden hair, good looking, and a good housekeeper. Respondent must be about thirty-three, handsome, loving, and in an independent position.

A. C., twenty-one, light hair, dark-brown eyes, fair complexion, and loving, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, dark hair and eyes, able to play the piano, and loving.

ROSE M., nineteen, tall, dark hair, light-brown eyes, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a tall dark gentleman, must be of a loving disposition.

IDA K., nineteen, below medium height, light-brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, considered good looking, and will have money on her wedding-day. Respondent must be about twenty-one, dark hair and eyes; a baker preferred.

CLARA, nineteen, a widow, tall, blue eyes, Auburn hair, domesticated, considered pretty, a beautiful cook, and in possession of some money, would like to correspond with a mechanic, he must be fond of home and children; one living in Cork preferred.

ALF., a respectable tradesman's son, twenty, highly educated, gentlemanly appearance, tall, in a good position in business in the West End of London, wishes to correspond and make the acquaintance of a lady about seventeen or eighteen, of good education and means.

LEON S., twenty, tall, fair, gray eyes, considered good looking, of affectionate disposition, and a mechanic's daughter. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, dark, fond of children, possessing a comfortable income, and able to make a home comfortable.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ROSANNA is responded to by—"F. J. H.," twenty, medium height, rather dark, and would make "Rosanna" a loving partner.

EDWARD K. by—"C. H. S.," nineteen, tall, fair, loving, and fond of home.

MAUD by—"J. M. Smith," twenty-four, a merchant, tall, fair, fond of home and music.

NEW ZEALAND by—"Emma," thirty, dark, loving, respectable, and fond of business.

HARRY W. by—"Bessie," twenty-four, dark, curly hair, blue eyes, of a good figure, and would not object to live in America.

CARA CLARA by—"J. F.," twenty-four, the daughter of a highly respectable tradesman, tall, and of a fair complexion.

AUGUSTUS by—"Jenny," twenty-six, dark, considered pretty, affectionate, cheerful, and capable of making a home happy.

JOHN W. by—"L. E.," seventeen, tall, rather fair, dark eyes, fond of music, affectionate, and of a loving disposition.

THOMAS by—"Jonny," eighteen, tall, not very fair, considered very handsome, affectionate, loving, fond of home and children.

H. S. D. by—"Brunette," she is tall and graceful, intelligent, good tempered, very loving, fond of home and children.

IN EARNEST by—"Pollie," nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, of a good family, musical, and all "In Earnest" can desire.

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